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THE APOSTOLIC AGE

A Study of the Early Church and Its Achievements

BY
WILLIAM BANCROFT HILL, D.D.
Frederick Weyerhaeuser Professor of Biblical Literature in Vassar College

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To the Noble Band of
Foreign Missionaries
in many lands to-day who reproduce
the Apostolic Age

PREFACE

IN undertaking to present the history of the Apostolic Age in a volume of moderate size, I have had to limit myself strictly as regards description and discussion. The restriction upon descriptive writing I do not regret. To picture the view from the Areopagus or to describe the monuments of ancient Athens, sheds little light upon Paul's labours in that city. But I wish it had been possible to discuss more fully the mooted points in apostolic history, which are many. The temptation to do so, in footnotes if not in the text, was strong; but I have kept to the rule of simply stating my conclusions without going into all that might be said against them. Lest this should make me seem at times dogmatic, I wish to say that I have ever recognized the authority of the great scholars, and shaped my statements after careful consideration of what they set forth.

While I have been indebted constantly to those who have written before me, I have rarely made acknowledgment of that debt. Often it would be impossible to do so; for after a quarter of a century spent in studying and teaching the Apostolic Age, one is puzzled to trace the source of many of his most helpful ideas. Indeed, every writer upon a Biblical subject "is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52).

The Apostolic Age was the great missionary age of the church, and should be studied as such. For this

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reason I have found my own somewhat intimate acquaintance with foreign missions a constant aid in realizing the work and problems of the apostles and their churches. Much that to the scholar in his study seems inexplicable, becomes clear and almost a matter of course to the missionary who labours in a field where heathen life and thought similar to that of the first century surround him. I am convinced that the most illuminating book on the Apostolic Age remains to be written by some one who combines the ripest scholarship with the widest knowledge of foreign missions to-day.

W. B. H.

Vassar College,
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Apostolic Age began when Jesus entrusted to His disciples the work of proclaiming His gospel and building His church; this was in the year 29 or possibly 30 A.D. But when did it end? If we define it as the period when the apostles were still alive, its close was when the last one died,—a date we do not know. James, the brother of John, was martyred in 44 A.D., and was probably the first of the Twelve to die; but we have no certain information about the death of the others. If the Apostolic Age is defined more broadly as the period in which the church assumed an established form and creed through the influence of the apostles, still there is question as to the proper date for its termination. Many scholars would select 70 A.D., the year when Judaism received what promised to be a mortal blow by the burning of the temple, the destruction of the holy city, and the suppression of the Sanhedrin. For the Jewish portion of the apostolic church that date certainly marks an epoch; but for the Gentile portion, which was then much the larger, it has far less significance. A more favourite date, which we shall adopt, is 100 A.D., not mainly because tradition says that John, as the last of the apostles, died about that time, but because at the end of the century the freshness and force of apostolic initiative had ceased, and the spirit that produced the

Old Catholic Church of the second century was becoming dominant.

1. The Importance of the Apostolic Age.

The Apostolic Age is often held up for admiration and imitation as the time—and the only time—when Christianity existed in purity and perfection, and when church life and institutions were ideal. This is a serious mistake. If we bear in mind the environment in which the Church had to live, and from which it gained its members,—the narrow and bigoted Jewish world, the depraved, superstitious, idolatrous Gentile world,—we cannot expect to find it free from defects. The apostle of old, like the missionary of to-day, had to build with the material he found at hand; and much of it was wood, hay, stubble. Moreover, to select any period in the past as a pattern and seek simply to reproduce it, is to check all healthy growth and development, thereby making Christianity as stereotyped and unprogressive as Islam. The Golden Age lies ever in future, not in the past.

Nevertheless, the Apostolic Age is for every student the most important period of church history except his own. All we know about the life and teachings of Jesus and the origin of the Christian religion is gained from this period in which the New Testament, that precious text-book of our faith, came into existence. Without a knowledge of the beginnings, the later movements of Christianity are as mysterious as were the rise and fall of the Nile when its sources were unknown. Again, these early years were a time of freshness and enthusiasm, when the Church displayed a force and consecration that have never been surpassed and form an ever-inspiring example. The Apostolic

Age was the great missionary age of the Church. The apostles were, as the name signifies, missionaries; and the whole Church was aflame with missionary zeal. The record of those days, given in the New Testament, is a record of mission work, at first among the Jews, home missions, but soon and mainly among the Gentiles, foreign missions. The experiences and problems, the trials and triumphs of the Apostolic Church are repeated to-day on mission fields; so that the Book of Acts and the epistles of Paul remain the best manual for mission workers; while, on the other hand, an intimate acquaintance with present-day missions is an almost indispensable preparation for a full understanding of the first Christian century. Above all, the Apostolic Age was a day of mighty personalities, of men whose minds were illumined by the Holy Spirit and whose words have been recognized and treasured as inspired utterances. We look up to these men as our authoritative teachers. But to interpret their teachings we must know not only what they said, but when and to whom and why they said it. The text of the New Testament is not complete until we add the context of the circumstances that called it forth.

2. The Historical Sources.

For our knowledge of the Apostolic Age we have to rely almost wholly upon the New Testament. Its various books were all or nearly all written during the first century; so a student has the unusual advantage of direct access to contemporaneous documents. The historical value of each will be considered as we take them up later on. Other Christian sources are few. A book that nearly gained a place in the New Testament is the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,

written in 95 A.D. by a bishop of Rome to rebuke certain disorders in the church at Corinth. Its special value is the light it throws upon church organization at that time. A little book recently discovered is the Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, written not long after 100 A.D. and incorporating an earlier manual of Christian instruction known as The Two Ways. Considering its size we are surprised at the amount of information it gives concerning the rites and the life of the church. The only Jewish historian of the period is Josephus; from him we gain a full history of Palestine down to the close of the Jewish War, 70 A.D., but only an item or two about Christianity. Roman historians of the first century are few in number, and there was little to make them notice the obscure and despised sect of Christians. Tacitus graphically describes how they were persecuted by Nero, and in this connection gives the following account of the origin of Christianity: "The name [Christians] was derived from Christ who in the reign of Tiberius had suffered under Pontius Pilate. Though repressed for a time, the deadly superstition broke out again not only through Judea, the source of this evil, but through the city [Rome] whither all horrible and shameful things from every quarter flow together and are practiced." Suetonius seems to tell of a clash between the Jews and the Christians in Rome, resulting in the expulsion of both by Claudius (Acts 18:2). And Pliny the Younger gives a most interesting account, which will be quoted later, of his experiences with the Christians when he was governor of Bythynia in 112 A.D. Archaeological research has found practically nothing that can be pronounced a Christian work of the first century; the church was

too poor and feeble and persecuted to build monuments or construct edifices. But archaeology has done much to strengthen our confidence in the Book of Acts by showing its accuracy concerning the complex details of the life of the times.

3. Luke and the Book of Acts.

The one historical book in the New Testament, apart from the Gospels, is the Book of Acts; and we have to depend largely upon it for our knowledge of the first half of the Apostolic Age. Its trustworthiness has been constantly assailed by writers who reject miracles and the supernatural origin of Christianity, both of which are clearly set forth in the book, and also by writers whose theories about the early development of the church do not agree with the account in Acts. Some critics maintain that it is wholly a second-century piece of fiction; while others, recognizing that it contains much authentic history, try to prove that it is a patchwork of first-century fragments put together in the second century by some unknown editor or redactor who added whatever portions the individual critic does not wish to accept. Since Acts is such an important source, we must consider carefully who the author was and what grounds we have for trusting his statements.

Certain portions of Acts, namely, 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16,—written in the first person plural, and therefore known as the "we" passages,—are evidently by an eyewitness. Their minute and graphic details and mention of matters of purely personal interest reveal this. Some scholars assert that they are portions of a journal kept by one of Paul's travel companions, which came down to the late and

unknown author of Acts and were incorporated by him in his book. What became of the rest of the precious document, they do not attempt to tell us. But in style and vocabulary these portions are one with the rest of Acts; and certainly if the compiler rewrote the fragments to make them harmonize with his own composition, he would not have left them thus awkwardly in the first person when the rest is in the third. The simplest and most natural explanation of the change in persons is that the writer uses "we" whenever he himself was present in the scenes he describes. If, then, the author of the "we" passages is the author of the whole book, he must be some companion of Paul who is not mentioned by name in Acts, but who, being with Paul at Rome (28:16), would naturally be named in some one of his letters written from Rome. Luke is such a companion; and tradition assigns the book to him. Apart from what we may gather from the "we" passages, we know only that he was a Gentile, a colabourer with Paul in Rome, and his "beloved physician" (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; II Tim. 4:11). It is claimed that his authorship of the Third Gospel and Acts is indicated by their accurate use of medical terms and their frequent accounts of healings; but all that can fairly be said is that these show the author to have had a deep interest in medical matters, such as would befit a physician.

If Luke or whoever wrote Acts was Paul's companion at the times indicated by the "we" passages, he had abundant opportunity to learn the facts he narrates not only from his own observation and from Paul, but also from Peter and other apostolic workers whom he must have met repeatedly. Moreover, there are clear indications that when writing the early part of

the book he made use of an Aramaic document, a record of the first years of the church in Jerusalem, as his main source. His narrative covers a wide field,—Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome,—at a time when in social, political and religious conditions these lands differed much from one another, and were undergoing frequent changes. Had the author lived in a later century or been a careless historian, he could not have avoided errors and anachronisms. His freedom from these, as increasingly shown by archaeological and historical research, is a strong proof of his trustworthiness. Another proof of the same is the agreement of his statements with those in Paul's letters. There are discrepancies, such as always arise when two persons independently describe the same event, and which in this instance prove that the author of Acts could not have been a second-century Christian, writing with Paul's epistles at hand for consultation; yet the two accounts not only are in general agreement, but have many coincidences that could not be designed because they do not become evident until Acts is carefully studied along with the epistles. These facts collectively have led the majority of scholars to-day to conclude both that Luke wrote Acts and that he was an historian of high order. The conclusion is of great importance since it bears upon more than our knowledge of the Apostolic Age. The author of Acts was unquestionably the author of the Third Gospel; in dedication, style, vocabulary, and arrangement of material the two books are alike, and the writer himself links them together (Acts 1:1). Therefore, if his history of the apostles is a careful and trustworthy narrative, we can accept with confidence his record of the life of Jesus.

In the thought of Luke the Book of Acts was a natural continuation of the gospel narrative. His first book told what Jesus "began both to do and to teach until the day in which He was received up" (Acts 1:1-2); this second book tells what Jesus continued to do and to teach through the apostles after His ascension. He writes as before for Theophilus,—either some special friend or, as the name signifies, any "lover of God." There was need of his book; for many of the Christians in his day must have had very little idea of how the church started in Jerusalem, or how the gospel came by stages to them. He shows clearly the instincts of an historian; but he does not undertake to give a history of the whole church, or of all the apostles, or even of Peter and Paul. What he does set forth is how Christianity burst the bonds of Judaism and developed from a little sect into a universal religion; how it spread from Jerusalem to the center of the Roman world (note that the various sections of the book each end with a statement of the growth of the church, 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20); and what an important part Paul took in its development. The book is a record of the fulfilment of the Lord's farewell words, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (1:8). There seems to be, also, a purpose to set forth the fact that in the early days of the church the Roman government was friendly and, whenever opportunity for investigation was given, pronounced the charges against Christians to be false and malicious (13:12; 16:39; 17:9; 18:14; 23:29; 28:31).

The record brings Paul to Rome, and closes abruptly

with the statement that he was there two years in captivity, though allowed to preach and teach. Why did Luke stop just at this point? The old answer, which some still give, was that he had brought his story down to date; if so, and if Paul reached Rome in 59 A.D., the time of writing was 61 A.D. Other answers are that, having traced the spread of Christianity to the center of the Roman world, he had completed his appointed task, or that he had reached the point where the Roman government began to be unfriendly, and therefore preferred to keep silent about Paul's severer imprisonment and death. The simplest answer is that he stopped because his roll of papyrus had grown as large as was usable,—as large as that of his Gospel; and he closed this volume, as he did the Gospel, with a brief summary of events to be described more fully in the next (28:30-31; cf. Luke 24:50-53). A hint of his purpose to write a third volume may lie in his opening words where he speaks of the Gospel not as "the former treatise," which would limit his books to two, but as "the first treatise" which implies still others to come. Alas! a third volume was never written,—why, we do not know.

Acts was written, of course, after the Gospel of Luke, whose date is usually thought to be not long after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. To fix the time of writing more exactly is impossible. The writer's desire to set forth the former friendliness of the Roman government, would indicate a period when governmental persecution was threatened, say the early years of Domitian, who reigned 81-96 A.D. Some scholars find indications that Luke was acquainted with the Jewish Antiquities of Josephus, which was written 93-94 A.D.; if this could be proved, the date of Acts

would have to be placed still later. If the authorship by Luke is established, the exact time when he wrote is not greatly important.

The two principal Greek texts of Acts are reproduced for the English reader in the two versions with which he is familiar. The Authorized or King James Version translates the text generally used and officially accepted in the fourth century; and the Revised Version follows an earlier text which modern scholarship pronounces most nearly the original. A third text, not reproduced in any version but often referred to and important in the study of Acts, is that of Codex Bezae or D,—a sixth century manuscript now in the library of Cambridge University. It differs from the other texts by slight additions and interpolations, e.g., Peter and the angel when leaving the prison "went out and descended the seven steps" (12:10), and Paul at Ephesus was reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus "from the fifth to the tenth hour" (19:9). If Codex Bezae stood alone, we might disregard it, but it is the chief representative of a group of manuscripts whose text, called the Western Text and showing the same sort of variations, was prevalent in the second century. How valuable these bits of extra information are, it is hard to tell. Probably they came down by tradition, and were added by copyists who wished to preserve them. Some seem to be historic, and all deserve consideration. Any good commentary will give the most important ones.

I

THE DAYS OF PREPARATION AND PENTECOST

THE Apostolic Age cannot be separated from the life of Jesus. Even those who see in Him only a remarkable Galilean peasant, recognize that His influence formed and His teachings illuminated the little band of men and women who were the nucleus of the Christian church,—the tiny seed from which was to spring an innumerable company of believers. And those who worship Him as the Saviour of the world gladly confess that the works of the apostles were wrought through faith in Him, and the truths they taught were a part of "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Accordingly, a study of what Jesus said and did, involving a study also of the life, thought and Messianic expectations of those among whom He lived and to whom He offered Himself as Messiah, is an indispensable preparation for a study of the Apostolic Age. But the subject is so large and important that I have given it a volume by itself, and shall not attempt even to outline it in the opening chapter of this book. On the other hand, no view of Christ is complete without a careful survey of the labours and teachings of His disciples; for in them we may see Him still working and teaching, even as Paul declares when he says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). For this reason the student of the life of Jesus, like the writer of the Book of Acts, is conscious of no break or new beginning when he passes from the

gospel story to the history of the early Christian church. He is still pursuing the record of the world's redemption by divine love incarnate.

1. The Forty Days with Jesus.

The period between the resurrection and the ascension is usually studied as a part of the life of Jesus, attention being centered upon the empty tomb, the number and character of His appearances to His disciples, the nature of His body, and whatever proves that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). In this case little is noted concerning the disciples themselves except the way in which their despair was changed to joyful assurance,—a change without which there never could have been the Christian church. But if the period is studied as a part of the training of the disciples for future service, we soon recognize that no other days were so important and fruitful. They must have been more full of personal instruction by the risen Lord than is usually realized. His meetings with His followers may have been greater in number than what are reported; and certainly they were not brief, fugitive manifestations of Himself. The long afternoon walk to Emmaus, the breakfast and subsequent conversation at the Lake, the evening reunions in the upper room, these were not of short duration; and there is no reason to suppose that the others were. And all these many hours of closest intercourse were devoted to the instruction of the disciples, as, truly, there was great need that they should be.

When the little band fairly grasped the stupendous fact that their Lord had triumphed over death, they were filled with joy and courage; but they were far

from being prepared to go forth and proclaim His gospel. They lacked knowledge, organization and power. They had not fully gained the message they were to carry to a waiting world; they had not learned to work as one body in proclaiming it; and the inward impelling force, the "we cannot but speak" (Acts 4:20), had not yet been felt. They could tell the story of the cross, but with feeble comprehension of its meaning; they were severally members of Christ, but not yet unitedly the body of Christ; and their labours without the Holy Spirit would be lifeless and fruitless. Therefore, for them, as for all missionaries, there had to be a period of special preparation before they could go forth to make disciples. In their case the period was very brief, but the training was intense.

Up to the time of His death Jesus had laboured against insuperable obstacles when He tried to impart His gospel to His followers. Their preoccupation with old, erroneous ideas, their interest in the marvellous rather than in the important, their lack of spiritual understanding, tried Him sorely (Mark 8:17; 9:19; 14:37); but what hindered most was the fact that not until the cross had been actually before their eyes, could He make clear to them its wondrous meaning. The pressure of these limitations upon His spirit is revealed in His cry, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). After the resurrection the hindrances were removed; and henceforth He could speak, no more in dark sayings but plainly (John 16:25), and to disciples no longer indifferent and stupid but stirred to the depths and ready to profit by every word of a Teacher who had come back after they thought they had lost Him forever.

There was, indeed, much for the disciples to learn which hitherto could not be taught them,—the person of the Messiah, the true nature of His Kingdom, the meaning of the cross, the mission of the Comforter, the purpose and significance of the sacraments, the character of their own future work. Concerning some of these we are explicitly told that they were subjects upon which Jesus discoursed after His resurrection (Luke 24:27, 44-49; Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:3-8); concerning others we may be sure He would not leave His disciples in ignorance when they had need to know and ability to comprehend. There were, of course, questions of idle curiosity which should not be answered. And there was much that only future experience in mission work and future growth into the mind of the Master could make plain. With the divine teacher, even as with human teachers, the limitations of the pupil form the limitations of the pedagogue. Nevertheless, these precious hours of intercourse must have been profitable beyond measure for those to whom they were granted.

Possibly some of the words of Jesus spoken after the resurrection have been preserved among sayings assigned to His public ministry. For example, portions of the instructions to the Twelve, recorded by Matthew as having been given when He sent them forth for a little, independent tour in Galilee (10:17 f.), are not at all appropriate for that mission, but are most fitting for the final sending into the great world; and some of the words concerning the sacramental meal would be enigmatic at the Last Supper but full of meaning when He ate and drank with His disciples after He rose from the dead (Acts 10:41). But for the main part of what Jesus now taught, we turn to the teachings of

the apostles. Their work was not to invent a gospel, but to proclaim the one their Master entrusted to them; and those portions of it that were not given in the days before the crucifixion, must have been gained afterwards from further words by Jesus as well as from fresh light shed by the Holy Spirit upon His former words. Everything indicates that the disciples on the Day of Pentecost were prepared to place before their hearers a well ordered statement of Christian faith and practice, not so full, indeed, as it became later, but more than what the Gospels indicate Jesus had taught them before His death. Where could they gain it or how could they develop it without their Great Teacher? Sceptics have been forced to admit that the disciples really believed that Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared unto them, because it is evident that without such a belief there never would have been a sermon on the Day of Pentecost:—they could not have recovered so promptly and fully from the overwhelming consternation and despair of Good Friday. But the favourite sceptical explanation of this belief is that it was created by certain visions, real or fancied, which brought the conviction that Jesus had triumphed over death. Such an explanation, though it may account for the confidence with which the sermon at Pentecost was preached, fails wholly to account for the contents of that sermon. Paul, the trained theologian, needed months of meditation, after Jesus appeared to him, before he could grasp the gospel he was to proclaim; how could the unlettered Galilean fishermen do this in only seven crowded weeks? If in the days after His resurrection Jesus had been teaching them the many things He had yet to say (John 16:12), the answer is evident. Otherwise, there seems to be no sufficient answer.

2. The Birth of the Church.

When Jesus parted from His disciples on Mt. Olivet, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke 24: 52). They could rejoice because He had gone to His Father (John 14: 28), and also because some day He would surely come again (Acts 1: 11). Until that day they were ready to give themselves, with all the force of the spiritual life He had imparted, to spreading the faith in Him which was the inspiration of their whole existence. No thought of their own feebleness and ignorance dismayed them; no dread of sacrifice and suffering held them back. Rather, a sense of the glory of their high calling made them eager to enter upon it. The program of their future work, as it shaped itself in their thought, was a simple one. The Jews must, if possible, be persuaded to accept Jesus as the long expected Messiah. This was the immediate and urgent task. Beyond it lay a world-wide mission; but the hope was that Israel as a nation, having accepted Christ, would become the missionary to all nations, even as the prophets had foretold. The Messianic Kingdom had not been established because the Jews were not prepared to receive the Messiah. John the Baptist had tried to prepare them, and had failed. Jesus Himself had tried and, also, had failed. Now His disciples were to try,—preaching the same old message of repentance from sins and faith in Jesus as the Messiah, but with the new tidings of His cross and His triumph over death, which added immensely to its power and to which especially they were to be witnesses (1: 8; 22). When the people were ready to receive Him, He would come to reign over them; until that time He must wait in heaven (3: 19 f.). Nevertheless

His followers would not be left as orphans (John 14:18); through the Holy Spirit whom He would send, He Himself would be with them, giving them power and guidance in their work, and granting unto them a foretaste of the joys of His Kingdom.

If the disciples were to offer Jesus as Messiah to their countrymen, the place to begin at was Jerusalem. There was where Jesus Himself had begun, and from which the preaching of John the Baptist had first called forth hearers (John 2:13 f.; Matt. 3:5). Accordingly, before His ascension Jesus brought the apostles back to the city, and charged them to wait the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to begin their witness-bearing there. The mother and brothers of Jesus and the band of faithful women who had been His followers came with them; and enough other disciples gathered to make the whole number about one hundred and twenty (Acts 1:15), if not more. A few of these were residents of Jerusalem or Judea, but so few that the term Galileans was applied to the whole body (2:7). An upper chamber, probably where the Last Supper was eaten and in the house of Mark, served as an abiding place for the apostles and a meeting-place for the others. Grouped thus together, sharing one common life and hope, hidden as yet from the world, the little band of believers at once began to develop a real unity. In their relation to Jesus they had been disciples; in their relation to one another they now became brethren. There was no need of a membership roll; they knew each other with increasing intimacy. And in that upper chamber they joined with one accord in religious services, such as the worship in the synagogue suggested and their own spiritual needs prompted. Prayer was the chief feature of these meetings,—the example

of their Master and the cravings of their hearts would make it so; but naturally there was eager searching of the Old Testament, especially of the psalms and prophets, for teachings about the Messiah and His Kingdom. Jesus had laid open the meaning of these scriptures (Luke 24: 32, 45); and in the coming days they were to be a source of guidance and confidence to all disciples, and a strong weapon in conflicts with unbelievers. Also, we may infer, there was the celebration of the Lord's Supper in connection with a common meal. Such was the practice immediately after Pentecost; and it is difficult to understand how the change from an annual celebration of this sacrament at Passover time to a daily celebration could have come about, unless Our Lord before His ascension had taught it both by word and, as the record hints, by example (Acts 1: 4, R. V. margin).

The apostasy of Judas must have been a thing of horror to the other apostles. True, they themselves had failed their Master in His hour of darkness, but through a lack of courage for which there was some excuse and much forgiveness. Judas had sold Him treacherously and heartlessly,—an act incredible, were it not undeniable. And if one so highly trusted had fallen so low, who could be sure of even his own loyalty, or ask without trepidation, "Lord, is it I?" The departure of the traitor "to his own place" (1: 25)—significant phrase!—left a vacancy in the apostolic circle which they felt should be filled, if the work was to be carried on as Jesus had planned. Since that work was primarily to bear witness to the resurrection (1: 22), a necessary qualification, for it was a previous acquaintance with Jesus "beginning from the baptism of John," i.e., from the Galilean ministry (cf.

10:39-42). Note that however broad we make the apostolic task of witnessing to the resurrection, it cannot include church government; the apostles were leaders, of course, but they did not feel themselves to be rulers.

All the brethren shared in this matter of selecting a successor to Judas, but Peter with characteristic energy and confidence took the initiative. Christ's special appearance to him (Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:5) and special commission for him (John 21:15 f.) had restored him to his old place of natural leadership among his fellows. Two disciples were found who had been with Jesus from the beginning, though their names do not appear in the gospel narrative (a revelation of its incompleteness); and with prayer to Jesus the lot was cast that decided between them in favour of Matthias. This use of the lot has been unjustly criticized as mechanical or an appeal to chance. As a matter of fact the brethren had reached the limit of their ability when they selected two men both of whom fully met the outward requirements; the choice between these two could be made only by Him who can read the heart. And that they believed this final choice was made by Jesus Himself, is shown not only in the prayer before casting the lot, but also in the fact that Matthias without any human induction or consecration was at once "numbered among the apostles." It is well to note, however, that though the use of the lot is frequent in the Old Testament, there is no other instance of it in the New. Christian men have rightly used it since, but only on rare occasions when all other means of intelligent choice were lacking, and only with unconditional acceptance of its decision as the divine answer to a prayer for guidance. The selection of

Judas' successor has been criticized, also, as a premature action. The vacant place in the apostolate, it is said, belonged to Paul, as is shown by the fact that we hear no more of Matthias. But Luke, who was with Paul so much, gives no hint of this; and if Matthias never again is mentioned by name, neither are any others of the Twelve save Peter, James and John. Paul was an apostle; but we feel that he stood outside the Twelve,—a new leader for a new work.

3. The Baptism of the Church.

Pentecost, "the fiftieth," is so named because it comes on the fiftieth day after the second day of the Passover. If the Passover this year began on Friday evening, as John's account indicates, Pentecost fell on Sunday; and the events of the day would be among those that made the first day of the week peculiarly "the Lord's day." The feast was not as important as the Passover; but because it came at a better season for travel on land and sea, it was more largely attended by those who lived at a distance from Jerusalem. The day was free from work, and was observed with special offerings and services in the temple and with feasting at the homes.

The disciples on the morning of Pentecost "were all together in one place," probably in the upper chamber, and engaged in prayer (cf. 1:14), when suddenly they experienced the fulfilment of their Lord's promise, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (1:5). The signs preceding this,—the sound as of a mighty wind and the tongues of fire above each head,—were necessary and appropriate:—necessary because the baptism was a new and purely spiritual experience which they might not recognize

unless some outward indications of it were granted; appropriate since from the words of John the Baptist and of Jesus they had learned to associate the Holy Spirit with the fire and the wind (Luke 3:17, John 3:8). The speaking with other tongues, which was the immediate sequence of the entrance of the Holy Spirit, has given rise to much discussion,—more than its importance deserves. At first inspection Luke's narrative seems to imply that these tongues were foreign languages; in which case the gift was only a temporary one, for there is no evidence that later on the apostles had any supernatural command of languages (cf. Acts 14:11). But the speaking with tongues that Paul fully describes as it was manifested in the church at Corinth, is evidently the well-known and not unusual phenomenon of ecstatic utterance,—the incoherent words and inarticulate cries of overpowering spiritual excitement; and we notice that Paul's account agrees with this of Luke in that scoffers attribute such utterances to madness or drunkenness while those who listen sympathetically find a meaning in them (I Cor. 14:23, 27; Acts 2:13, 8). Moreover, sympathetic hearers at Pentecost gained no special message from the utterances, which seemed to them a voice (2:6 Greek) rather than words, and were aware only that the disciples were declaring "the wonderful works of God,"—an explanation of ecstatic utterances most natural for an Oriental. Each hearer did, indeed, think he recognized his native language, but this was because the voice spoke to the heart where all languages are one. Speaking with tongues is mentioned in Acts twice later on as an indication of the reception of the Holy Spirit (10:46; 19:6); and Paul puts it with the interpretation of tongues in his list of spiritual

gifts (I Cor. 12:10); but he puts it at the very bottom of the list, and declares, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (I Cor. 14:19).

As we meditate upon the Pentecostal baptism we cannot fail to recall the baptism of Jesus by John. In many ways the two are the same; naturally they would be so since the church is another body of Christ,—His reincarnation, in which He goes forth to win the world. The church before Pentecost was waiting the summons to begin its appointed work, even as was Jesus at Nazareth. The baptism of the Holy Ghost in both instances was this summons, and in both was indicated by outward signs appropriately significant. And as Jesus was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38), so the anointing with the Holy Ghost brought to the church power,—power for witness-bearing (1:8), displayed in a new boldness and confidence, a new consciousness of divine direction, a new imperative of duty, a new and holy joy. It was the church as a whole that received the Holy Spirit; though, as the division of fire into separate tongues indicates, special gifts were granted to individual members; for it is the church as a whole that constitutes the body of Christ (Eph. 4:4 f.).

When the voice of the disciples reached passersby in the street, it at once drew an increasingly large throng who marvelled at what they heard, and discussed loudly the state of the occupants of that upper room. Here was an audience and an opportunity which Peter was prompt to use. We have merely an outline of his speech, enough to show its main thought and its adaptation to the hearers. He uses the Old

Testament to clinch all his arguments, as he proceeds to prove that this outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the prelude to the coming of the Messianic Age, and that Jesus,—crucified, risen, by the hand of God exalted, and pouring forth this which they saw and heard,—is the long foretold Messiah. The teaching of Peter is taken up and spread abroad by his companions, all aflame with the new evangelistic zeal; and the fruit of their labour is three thousand converts. The account says these were added "in that day," which probably means, not in those few hours of the day of the feast, but in that whole first Pentecostal period. Still, if we take the word in its narrower sense, the account is not incredible. Pentecostal experiences within our own times confirm the possibility of such a great ingathering. There were, as we shall see, many reasons why the Messianic message would reach the hearts of these hearers; and, as Jesus had promised, the preachers were "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

II

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

THE converts at Pentecost were mostly visitors to the feast (2:8-11); and while some could remain indefinitely in Jerusalem, waiting the return of the Messiah, the majority must soon return home. They might carry to their Jewish neighbours in foreign lands what they had grasped of the gospel,—which was little more than that Jesus, the Messiah, would soon come again, and that men should forsake their sins in preparation for His coming; but they could win few to accept such an imperfect message, and would themselves soon cease to feel its force. For the development of an intelligent, zealous Christian life there must be the teaching of the apostles and the fellowship of other disciples; and these at present were to be found only in Jerusalem. That city, therefore, became the nursery and schoolroom of the church.

Luke, following his usual method, first gives a general outline of this opening period of the church (2:41-47), and then takes it up more in detail (3:1-8:1). How long it was, we can only conjecture; it ended with the martyrdom of Stephen, but some scholars would put this event as late as Pilate's recall to Rome (36 A.D.), while others would put it as early as 30 A.D. Two or three years would seem enough and not too much for all its events; so, if the period began in 29 A.D., we may reckon that it ended in 31 or 32 A.D.

1. The Outward Growth.

The growth of the church in membership at first was rapid. Beginning with three thousand at Pentecost (2:41), there was daily increase (2:47), the number of men rose soon to five thousand (4:4), multitudes both of men and of women were added (5:14), Jerusalem was filled with the teaching (5:28), disciples were multiplied exceedingly, including a great company of priests (6:7). No wonder the brethren thought that all the people would soon be prepared to welcome the Messiah, so that His return could take place in the near future, especially as His own words had created the impression that the interval of separation would not be long. Possibly one reason why they were so constantly in the temple during this period (2:46; 3:1; 5:12, 25, 42) was that, like Simeon and Anna, they looked for His first manifestation there (Mal. 3:1).

How shall we account for such rapid growth? We must begin by realizing that the acceptance of the new teaching was not felt to involve any break with the old Jewish faith and life. Jesus had scandalized the Pharisees by His neglect of some of their laws, especially their rigourous rules of Sunday observance; but He had sought, not to destroy but to fulfil the Law and the prophets. And His followers seemed to differ from other and orthodox Jews simply in their recognition of Him as the promised Messiah. Such recognition was not difficult now that the stumbling-block of the cross had been removed by the glory of the resurrection and, also, by the discovery that His death was foretold in the Scriptures as divinely ordered. True, the Messianic kingdom had not been established ac-

cording to their expectations, but the belief was confident that it would be thus established when Jesus returned. The task of gaining converts, therefore, was not a difficult one; and the apostles applied themselves to it with unceasing zeal (5:42). Their preaching, like that of John the Baptist, was with great power (4:33), both because of their earnestness and evident sincerity, and because their message,—the Messiah is at hand, prepare to receive Him,—was one that could not but thrill every Jewish heart. Invitation and warning, the attractiveness of the Messianic promises, and the terror of "Save yourselves from this crooked generation," were mingled in their addresses. Such preachers with such a message always gain a hearing and a following.

According to Luke the period was full of miracles (2:43; 5:12; 6:8; 4:30), though the only one of which he gives an explicit account is that of the beggar at the Beautiful Gate; for the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were not miraculous, and the messenger of the Lord who released the apostles from prison at night (5:19) may have been a fellow Christian. Shall we accept Luke's record? That depends upon our attitude towards miracles in general, which, in turn, depends upon our conception of God and His relations to the universe and man. If there is no God, or if He has no control over the world, or if He takes no special interest in man, or if man has need of nothing more than His ordinary operations to know Him and love Him, then miracles are idle or impossible; and Luke was weakly credulous in accepting the report of them. But if there is the God whom Jesus claimed to know and reveal, and if certain unusual acts on His part are necessary for the highest welfare of His children, then

miracles not only are possible but are a natural expression of a Heavenly Father's love. They have been brought into disrepute by treating the merely marvellous as miraculous; they have been cheapened by expecting each foolish and selfish wish to be gratified supernaturally; they have been unduly exalted as the main proof of the Christian religion, and unjustly decried as the product of ignorance and superstition: yet still they remain credible and precious to all who have learned to know the heart of God through the Son of His love. But belief in miracles does not involve an unquestioning acceptance of every reputed one; it is our right and duty to test the evidence and find, if possible, a natural explanation,—bearing in mind, however, that an event by which beholders were made to recognize God's presence and operation might have for them the value of a miracle, though we can discover its natural cause.

The story of the lame man who begged at the temple gate (3: 1 f.)—from whomever Luke gained it—bears evidence in the vividness and minuteness of its details that it came from an eyewitness; and the healing in the name of Jesus was a miracle for Peter and the beholders, even if it should be explained to-day as the effect of mental suggestion. To the apostles its supreme value lay in its confirmation of the assurance that Jesus would work with them and through them. He had healed by a word in the old days when they walked with Him; now in His name, i.e., acting as His representatives, they could do the same. They needed such strengthening of their faith for the labours and trials before them. Indeed, belief in the constant presence and power of an ever-living Lord, which was the very nerve of apostolic activities, might have grown

feeble and perished in the heathen darkness had it not been nourished by the testimony of miracles. But what about the effect of miracles upon the unconverted beholders? This one awakened wonder and amazement, and gained an audience for Peter; yet hearing the word, not marvelling at the miracle, was what caused belief (3:10; 4:4). And there is no indication that at any later time the miracles were of special aid in winning acceptance of the gospel. The one at Iconium made the beholders ready for the moment to worship Paul as a god, but did not restrain them a little later from stoning him until they supposed he was dead (14:8 f.). The one at Paphos overwhelmed an imposter; but the proconsul, before whom it was wrought, believed because he was "astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (13:6 f.). We must remember that the age was one when every teacher who gave himself out to be some great one was expected to work miracles; and their power to convince was proportionately weakened. A man who for other reasons believed, would have his faith increased by them; but a man who did not wish to believe, would remain unconvinced. Is not the same true even in this age of greater scientific knowledge?

Another cause of the rapid growth of the church was the attractive life of its members. Their religious zeal stirred them up to stricter faithfulness in observing all the ordinances of the Jewish Law, thereby winning for themselves the approval of even the Pharisees, those censorious guardians of the Law. And their practice of the precepts of Jesus and exhibition of His spirit in daily living gained them favour with all the people (2:47). One striking manifestation of the new law and life of love was in their own circle. Dur-

ing the days with Jesus His disciples had lived as a family, having all things in common; and now that they were waiting His speedy return it was natural for them to continue the same way of living. And it was also necessary; since support must be found, both for the apostles who were devoting themselves wholly to the work of preaching and teaching, and for those converts whose homes were in foreign lands but who now remained in Jerusalem to welcome Jesus on His return. Accordingly, the brethren who had possessions sold them as need required, and put the proceeds in the common purse (2:45; 4:32 f.). Evidently the church began its social life with an experiment in communism. Yet we must note that this communism was not compulsory (5:4); nor was it complete, e.g., the mother of Mark continued to hold her own house (12:12); and probably it was not as extensive as Luke's statement suggests, for the generosity of Barnabas in selling a field and giving the proceeds to the apostles, is deemed worthy of special mention, and seems to have received such praise as to create envy in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira (4:36 f.). We discover no traces of this communism elsewhere than in Jerusalem; and it did not work well even here. Almost at the outset murmurings arose over the distribution of the common funds (6:1); and the Jerusalem church ever remained poor and eager to receive charity (Gal. 2:10; Rom. 15:25 f.). Whether it also became filled with men who were attracted by the earthly bread rather than the heavenly, we cannot say; but this danger is evident.

2. The Inward Development.

Those early years at Jerusalem, when the brethren

lived in daily and closest intercourse, were greatly effective in shaping and developing the inner life of the church. First of all was the growth in knowledge. The converts, having been received into full membership with little knowledge of the new Way, needed much instruction in Christian facts and doctrine. The apostles took the lead in giving this, since they had been with Jesus and could tell the others what they had learned at His feet. Absence of anything like Christian Scriptures made their "ministry of the word" specially necessary; and the importance they attached to it is shown by their refusal to be drawn away into administrative work (6:2). They would constantly be asked to tell the story of Jesus' life, which few of the believers knew; and thus it was that during this period there came into existence what scholars call the Oral Gospel, i.e., the form of the gospel narrative that lies behind our first written Gospel. Such increasing acquaintance with the earthly years of Jesus would work a great change in the infant church; for the gospel story has transforming power in hearts that receive it gladly. Also, those who pondered upon the teachings of Jesus would be guided by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13) into further truths which are to His teachings what the fruit is to the seed.

One inevitable though gradual result of progress in knowledge would be the recognition that Christianity is not merely a form of Judaism but something new and different. Though the fact was not willingly accepted by men who had been taught that the Law and the prophets are the full and final word of God, it was forced upon them in many ways. The popular idea of the Kingdom of God,—earthly, political, sensuous, selfish,—did not harmonize with the teachings of

Jesus, and could not be imagined with Him as its ruler. And as believers meditated upon His nature and mission, it became increasingly clear that He was far more than a Jewish Messiah. Also, the old distinctions which made Judeans consider themselves better than Galileans, and both unite in looking down upon their brethren living outside the Holy Land, and all alike abhor the Gentiles,—distinctions which had been carried over into the church (6:1),—could not be maintained if believers were really brethren in one divine family. As for the Jewish law, the keeping of which was held to be the chief end of man, Jesus Himself had subordinated it to the higher law of mercy and love; and from His example quite as much as from His teachings, the disciples were learning that life is higher and more imperative than legalism. All this was leading them on to a broader and truer conception of Christianity, which some day must force a separation from Judaism. At present they were trying to keep the new wine in the old wineskins; and the rupture, as we shall see, did not come until the preaching of Stephen forced it. Had it come earlier, or had Jesus Himself taught the disciples to throw off Jewish forms, the church must speedily have perished through hatred and persecution.

Another natural and inevitable development of the church was in its organization. The choice of the Seven (6:1-6) illustrates how this would be brought about. In all Oriental lands the woman who has lost her husband and has no son or brother to care for her, is a helpless subject for charity. There had come to be among the church members a group of such women, perhaps forming a special body (cf. 9:39; I Tim. 5:3), who received their food at the daily common

meal; and the Hellenists, i.e., the Jewish brethren from foreign lands, complained that their widows did not receive as generous treatment as those of the Hebrews,—the brethren belonging in Palestine. Possibly the complaint was not well-founded; but evidently funds were not coming in as rapidly as applicants for them, and the daily ministration must be more carefully supervised. Following the recommendation of the apostles, the whole church selected seven men of reputation, spirituality and practical wisdom; and they were appointed to this new work with prayer and laying on of hands by the apostles. Because they were to "serve tables" we usually call them deacons (serving men), though there is no evidence that they were directly connected with the deacons of the later organization of the church (I Tim. 3:8 f.), or that their office continued after the end of this period. But here is an excellent example of how the regular church offices were created later on:—a new need demands attention; the right man is found for it, and set apart; and the beneficial results, as in this instance (6:7), are sufficient proof that the office is of divine appointment.

Church worship, too, must have been in process of steady development. The daily meetings of the brethren for "the breaking of bread and the prayers," at first might be most informal, but as the days went by would take on a prescribed form. The synagogue service, still dear to all these brethren, consisted of prayer, singing of psalms, reading from the Scriptures, teaching and something like the recital of a creed and a benediction. Naturally all these except the creed would be reproduced at the gathering of Christians for worship. And in addition there would be, as special

features, reminiscences of what Jesus did and said,—told by those who had known Him in His public ministry, and listened to with keenest interest by those who had not,—and the celebration of the Lord's Supper in connection with the common meal. Later on, this common meal was separated from the rest because it gave rise to disorders such as marred the worship at Corinth (I Cor. 11:20 f.); but the other parts of the service remain in the Christian church to this day with no essential change.

The characteristic feature of these opening years was a holy joy, which no sufferings could disturb (2:46; 5:41), and which arose from assurance of a place in the Kingdom of God with its present privileges and future blessings. Mingled with this was a feeling of awe (2:43; 5:11) caused by recognition of the presence of God and the operations of the Holy Spirit. And each believer felt himself entrusted with a divine commission of immeasurable importance. "At no time in its history has the church been possessed with so lofty a sense of its calling as in those days of small beginnings. It held the belief that the world was face to face with a mighty crisis in which the whole present order of things would come to an end, and a new age set in. The people of Christ were to reign with Him in this new age, * * * already they belonged to the new order, and had their share in the powers and privileges of the Kingdom of God" (Scott).

3. The First Testings.

It may seem strange that the rulers who had put to death the Shepherd should leave the sheep unharmed. But the very fact that Jesus was dead, caused them to let His disciples alone; without their prophet, it was

believed, these Galileans would soon lose heart. Meanwhile they were peaceful, popular, strict in religious observances; and their peculiar doctrines did not seem inconsistent with good Judaism. Little hostility would arise so long as the Christians were not too numerous nor too prominent. Nevertheless, there was constant possibility of collisions which might bring on serious conflicts.

The first opposition came from the chief priests. These, as Luke notes (5:17), were of the sect of Sadducees,—a sect that seems to us more like a political party, for it had little interest in Judaism except in the temple worship as a source of great income to the chief priests; it scoffed at the fervour of the Pharisees and their doctrine of a future life; and it aimed by every means to keep in favour with the Romans. When Peter healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate and preached in Solomon's porch his second recorded sermon, these chief priests had the captain of the temple take him and his companion, John, into custody, and on the morrow bring them before the Sanhedrin. Luke says they were roused to this action because the apostles "taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (4:2). This does not set forth the reason adequately. What the Sadducees ever feared and sought to suppress was any popular movement that might disturb their harmony with the Romans, and result in the loss of wealth and position; their attitude towards Jesus illustrates this (John 11:48). That the apostles should teach the people was unobjectionable, though that "ignorant and unlearned men" (i.e., men not taught by the rabbis and holding no official position) should presume to teach was marvellous (4:13); and that the apostles should

teach the resurrection as a doctrine was no more than what the Pharisees were ever doing, while the Sadducees simply laughed at them. But proclaiming in Jesus a Messiah risen from the dead and soon to come again, was incendiary; it might stir up an insurrection against the Romans, or bring down popular wrath upon the heads of those who had taken the lead in the crucifixion (5:28). The Sadducees wanted it severely punished; but they could not secure the adoption of harsh measures because the miracle was undeniable, and the Pharisees, who dominated the Sanhedrin, were not willing to move against these preachers, and—chiefest of obstacles—the people were on their side (4:14, 21; 5:26). All that the Sanhedrin did when Peter and John were brought before it, was to order that teaching and preaching in the name of Jesus must cease. This order the apostles boldly disregarded,—no human authority might overrule the divine. And their decision to obey God, even at the risk of the wrath of rulers, brought them a new influx of the Holy Spirit which gave new power to their witness-bearing (4:31, 33).

A second time the Sadducees were roused; and now all the apostles were thrown into prison; but by an aid recognized as divinely given, they were released at night, and at daybreak were back in the temple-porch teaching the people again (5:17 f.). Brought before the Sanhedrin once more, their fearless accusations made the Sadducees eager to slay them; but Gamaliel, speaking for the Pharisees, recommended a laissez-faire policy; and as a compromise they were let off with a beating, which the previous disobedience seemed to deserve, and with a fresh command to refrain from preaching, which again they proceeded to disobey.

Though the advice of Gamaliel was favourable to the church, it cannot be commended; the duty of the Sanhedrin was to accept or else reject the gospel set before them; indeed, as they found later, it could not be let alone.

After the failure of these two attempts to silence the apostles, their work seems to have gone forward for a season without opposition and with increasing success (5:41; 6:7). The attacks upon it by the Sadducees, who were not popular, would be a recommendation of it to most of the Jews. But while enemies without the church were striving vainly to check its growth, more subtle enemies within were threatening its spiritual life. That life demanded constant recognition of the Holy Spirit and obedience to His promptings; and these high requirements were as yet imperfectly realized; the very existence of the Holy Spirit was a new teaching (cf. 19:2). Two prominent members of the church, Ananias and Sapphira, thought they could succeed without detection in an attempt to serve both God and mammon, and might gain the credit of complete consecration at the cost of a lie to the apostles. Envious of the reputation Barnabas had won by his generosity, they too sold a field and brought the money to the apostles,—but only a part of it, though they professed to bring the whole. The deceit was quickly discovered, and was denounced by Peter sternly as a lie to the Holy Spirit and not merely to men. In this day of beginnings, when the dispensation of the Spirit was still new to all, there must be no relaxing of ethics, and no encouragement to believe that emotion may serve as a substitute for holiness. The words of Peter were given terrible emphasis by the immediate death of the guilty pair, in which—

whatever its natural cause—the church recognized a divine endorsement of the apostle's utterance. It caused a searching of every heart, a fear which purified the church from hypocrites, an increase of reverence for the apostles, and a greater manifestation of the power of God working through them (5: 11 f.).

4. The Martyrdom of Stephen.

The period of peace could not continue indefinitely. The Pharisees, who were leaders of the people and guardians of the Law, would be roused by the rapid increase of the Christians, and begin to fear that the apostles might presently have more power than themselves. Also, they would have good grounds for suspecting that this new sect was something other than orthodox Judaism. Its founder had been condemned for blasphemy; could those who cherished His memory and followed His teachings be true sons of Israel? The present leaders were Galilean fishermen who knew not the Law; what right had they to teach, and could they be safe guides? These daily meetings for worship, why were they held apart from the synagogue and the temple? This putting a proselyte into prominence (6: 5), was this the spirit of strict Judaism? How far the brethren themselves recognized that they were slowly but steadily growing away from the faith of their childhood, we cannot tell. That they must become separate or else ultimately be lost in Judaism, is clear to us; but reared as they had been under the Law, and proud of their privileges as Jews, it was difficult for them to see this.

Stephen, a server of tables and not an apostle, and probably a Hellenist and not a Hebrew, was the first to grasp the difference between Jewish exclusiveness

and legalism and Christian inclusiveness and liberty; yet how far he fully apprehended it, we are puzzled to say. He had been selected as leader of the Seven because he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit," and had proved to be not only a wise administrator but also an able and convincing preacher, "full of grace and power." There were in Jerusalem special synagogues for Jews from different foreign lands, just as in our large cities there are special churches for foreigners of various nationalities. And in these synagogues (whether the text indicates one, two or five, is an unsolved and unimportant problem, 6:9) Stephen defended the new faith so ably that his antagonists, beaten in argument, spread the slander that he spoke "blasphemous words against Moses and God"; and when he was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, they made the more precise accusation that he was constantly speaking against the temple and the Law,—indeed, that they had heard him say Jesus would destroy the temple and change the customs that Moses had handed down. The witnesses were false, yet doubtless there was a degree of truth in the charge, even as in the similar one brought against Jesus (Mk. 14:58; John 2:19). Stephen's words had been distorted and torn from their context, thus making a half truth which is ever more difficult to refute than an outright lie.

The speech of Stephen before the Sanhedrin is reported at fuller length than any other in Acts. Doubtless Luke got his account from Paul, who never could forget Stephen's words or his face which, as he burned with the flame of the Spirit, was "as it had been the face of an angel." The speech is a long review of Jewish history from the call of Abraham to the build-

ing of the temple, and in certain details it follows the popular traditional account rather than the Old Testament. But just what was Stephen trying to show in it? Some scholars hold that he was setting forth the broader Christianity, as Paul did later, by pointing out that God's favour is not confined to the Jews and Palestine and the Law and the temple. But such catholicity, while true to the spirit of Jesus, had not yet been grasped by the church, and even in Paul's day was abhorrent to the Hebrew Christians. If Stephen had proclaimed that the barriers between Jew and Gentile no longer existed for followers of Jesus, he would have raised a storm of protest in the church itself. Other scholars see in the speech an attempt to prove that all through their history the Jews had resisted the Holy Spirit, even as they did when dealing with Jesus:—they had rejected Moses, they had turned from the tabernacle to the golden calf and the host of heaven, and they had emphasized the temple, though they had been taught that the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands. This would not be a direct answer to the charges against Stephen, but it is an indirect answer; and—what was of more importance to him—it gave a chance to preach Jesus, through the parallelism between those ancient deeds and the present treatment of the Messiah and His spiritual lessons.

The speech was never finished. As its application became cuttingly close, the Sanhedrin grew wild with rage; and when Stephen, rapt in spirit, cried that he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, they rushed on him with one accord and dragged him away. He had uttered blasphemy in the hearing of all, and should be stoned to death outside the city (Heb. 13:13 f.). The law that a death sentence must be

passed by a procurator was disregarded; there was no wish to throw upon the Romans the responsibility for this death, as there was in the case of Jesus; and Pilate was now finding it so difficult to control the Jews that he would prefer to ignore this act of their leaders. Stephen died at the hands of a mob; and yet—as sometimes in the action of mobs—the prescribed forms of justice were not wholly abandoned; the witnesses were made to cast the first stones (Deut. 13: 9). And the narrator adds one item, which only Paul would remember, "They laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." As they stoned Stephen he sank to his knees, and with a prayer which echoed that of Jesus when being nailed to the cross, he passed to meet the Lord whom he had seen risen to His feet to welcome him. Thus the church received its first baptism of blood, and the long line of martyrs began.

III

THE ENTRANCE INTO THE LARGER FIELD

THE church had been so comfortable and flourishing in Jerusalem, and so confident that Jesus would soon return thither, that it had undertaken no work elsewhere. True, there were Christians in Damascus (9:2) and other foreign cities (26:11),—men who had returned home after accepting the gospel at Jerusalem; but all of these were Jews or proselytes (the door had not yet been opened to Gentiles); and, lacking knowledge and leadership, they seem to have made little effort to win even their Jewish neighbours. Though the apostles had been commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel, beginning from Jerusalem, they showed no desire to take more than the initial step. Possibly they waited for Jesus to be their leader on His return; more probably they felt that there was abundant work at home,—a very common excuse for refusing to undertake foreign missions. Had they persisted in staying in Jerusalem and succeeded in converting Palestine, though such success was most improbable, the whole later history of Christianity would have been changed. There would have been no disastrous revolt against the Romans, Jerusalem would have remained the dominant city of Christendom with the head of the church residing there, the temple would have become the most sacred Christian sanctuary, and the narrow Jewish type of Christianity might have continued in-

definitely. There was need that the church should be stirred up and forced to enter the larger field.

1. The Scattering by Persecution.

The murder of Stephen let loose immediately all the accumulated hatred against the Christians. Saul seems to have led the mob on that same day from house to house, dragging the terrified inmates—women as well as men—to prison, and ravaging the church as a wild boar would a vineyard (8:3, cf. Ps. 80:13). The only safety for those assailed was in flight or hiding. But Luke's statement that all the church except the apostles were scattered abroad must not be taken too literally. Even in the first fury of the storm there were strong and willing friends to shelter the Christians,—friends like the devout Jews who carried Stephen's body to the grave with great lamentation. The Hellenists had begun the persecution and, with Saul at their head, would direct it mainly against believers whom they knew personally, i.e., against the Hellenistic Christians who worshipped in their synagogues. These would flee from Jerusalem to their former homes; the others, hidden by friends in the city or near at hand, would wait the stilling of the tempest. There seem to have been other martyrs (26:10); but the madness of the persecution abated quickly, as such sudden outbursts usually do. When Saul had departed for Damascus, sober second thought and the counsel of such men as Gamaliel would soon calm the others; the Roman authorities would be on guard against further riot; the prisoners would be released with little punishment, for really there was no charge upon which to hold them; and life would resume its normal course. Yet it never again could be

quite the old peaceful, favoured life. Henceforth the Christians would be viewed with suspicion, if not with hostility; and the church would make slower progress in the Holy City.

In many ways the persecution was a blessing to the church, as persecutions often prove to be. It purged out false and half-hearted members; it ended the too comfortable communistic living; and it spread far and wide the Christian teaching (8:4; 11:19). The men who were forced into the outer world were earnest in spirit and instructed in the faith, and they became good missionaries. Few of them could do itinerant work,—they had families and must establish homes and earn their daily bread; but every Christian home was a witness to the gospel, and every group of such homes—for believers would love to keep together—formed a little Christian community. One effect of the persecution, however, was deplorable:—it gave the initial impulse towards a split in the church. The believers who belonged to Jerusalem would resume life there as soon as it was safe to do so; the rest would remain permanently elsewhere. Thus the Jerusalem church was henceforth composed almost wholly of Hebrews who clung to the legalistic, Jewish form of Christianity, and were unable to sympathize and scarcely to fellowship with their Hellenistic brethren who made their homes amid the influences of the great Graeco-Roman world. We shall see the trouble this caused later on. And yet we must recognize that if the Christians in Jerusalem had not lived in obedience to the Law, a fresh persecution would have driven them from the sacred city forever; and this would have been a sad loss to the whole church.

2. The Jews of the Dispersion.

Most of the Christians who fled from Jerusalem remained among their countrymen in Samaria and Judea (8:1); and those who went outside the Holy Land offered the gospel at first to none but "the Dispersion" (11:19), i.e., to those Jews who lived outside of Palestine, and in Acts are called Hellenists (Grecians) because they spoke Greek. The majority of Jews were now of this number. The ancestors of some had never returned from the exile, of others had been carried off by later conquerors or coaxed to leave by attractive offers from founders of cities who knew that Jews make good citizens. They were to be found all around the Mediterranean, in Mesopatamia and perhaps farther East; indeed, the old geographer, Strabo, says, "It is not easy to find a place in the world that has not received this race" (cf. Acts 15:21). They lived mostly in the cities, forming distinct communities, and enjoying special privileges gained in various ways. With their financial genius some of them gained great wealth, and with their native ability others rose to positions of much influence. Though Rome put Oriental religions under a ban, she made Judaism an exception, allowing its adherents to gain proselytes and to administer their sacred Law, which was at once a religious, a civil, and a criminal code. This explains why Saul could be given authority by the Sanhedrin to arrest any Christian Jews in Damascus and bring them to Jerusalem for trial (9:2), and why, after he himself became a Christian, he could be five times scourged by Jewish officials (II Cor. 11:24), though other officials would not dare to scourge him because he was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25). The Jews did not have to wor-

ship the emperor, though mad Caligula once tried to make them; and they were exempt from military service, because their religion forbade them to fight on the Sabbath.

We have already remarked that the Hellenists were more liberal than the Hebrews. Many causes combined to broaden their religious ideas:

(*a*) Since the most zealous and narrow Jews refused to live elsewhere than in the Holy Land, the leaders of the Dispersion were chosen from the more tolerant; and they laid less stress on the oral law which the scribes and rabbis of Jerusalem constantly developed and deemed even more important than the Law recorded in the Old Testament.

(*b*) Dwelling among heathen neighbours they found it impossible to follow out minutely all the many regulations concerning meats and drinks and sacrifices and ceremonial purity; so they came to recognize the spirit of the Law as more important than the letter.

(*c*) Because they could visit the temple only at long intervals, the synagogue became the center of their religious life; and its services were more instructive and elevating than the sacrifices at Jerusalem. A synagogue or, at least, "a place of prayer" (16:13) was to be found wherever there were not less than ten pious male Jews with leisure to carry on its services.

(*d*) The conceit caused by provincialism, which made the Hebrews look with disdain upon the intellectual life of other nations, was not as great in the Hellenists. Though the more scrupulous might hold back from studying Greek literature, they could not but gain some Greek culture by daily contact with a world full of it; and in Greek thought they found much that influenced their interpretation of the Old Testament,

and expanded their views of life and duty. We may sum up the effect of all these causes by saying that the Jew of the Dispersion differed from the Jew of Jerusalem somewhat as the man who spends his life in a great metropolis differs from his brother who has never left the secluded mountain hamlet which was their common home in childhood.

When among Gentile neighbours the Jew had an unfortunate knack of incurring dislike, caused in part by envy of his successful rivalry. He was ridiculed for the peculiarities of his religion, especially for Sabbath-keeping, rejection of idols, and refusal to eat pork; and he was slandered and hated because he persisted in standing aloof from the rest of mankind. Nevertheless, in an age when thoughtful men were turning with increasing disgust from the sensuality and superstition of heathen cults, there was much to attract them to the Jewish religion. It set forth one God, supreme, spiritual, holy, whose worship is free from immorality; it promised forgiveness of sins here and eternal life hereafter; it had a high standard of ethics, an admirable home life, and an honourable position for woman. And the Jew cordially welcomed those who were drawn to it. They might read his Scriptures which had been translated into Greek (the Septuagint); they might on certain conditions attend the services in his synagogue; and, if willing to take the step, they might be received into the Jewish fold. Some were willing; and after submitting to baptism and circumcision and offering a sacrifice, they were placed upon nearly, though not quite, the same footing as native-born Jews. In Acts these converts are called "proselytes" (2:10; 6:5). A much larger number of Gentiles accepted the great truths of the Jewish re-

ligion, but refused to take on the bondage of the Law with its constant restraints and inevitable isolation. In Acts these are called "the devout" or "those that fear God" (10:2; 17:17). They loved to attend the synagogue and mingle with Jewish friends; and they were allowed to do this if in turn they abstained from certain foods and practices that were abhorrent to Jews. Probably the restrictions were practically the same as those laid down in the Old Testament for the stranger who sojourned among the children of Israel (Lev. XVII-XVIII). It was among these God-fearing Gentiles that Christianity, as it freed itself from Judaism, found its most receptive hearers, since it offered all that had drawn them towards the Jewish religion without the restraints that had repelled.

3. The Gospel in Samaria.

The Samaritans sprang from a mingling of heathen colonists with the remnant of the Ten Tribes left in Samaria after the overthrow of Israel in 721 B.C. (II Kings 17:24 f.). They accepted the Pentateuch but not the rest of the Old Testament; they kept the Law,—very imperfectly, the Jews thought; they had a temple on Mt. Gerizim until the Jews destroyed it in 128 B.C.; and they were looking for the Messiah, though with expectations less political than those of the Jews. Between the Samaritans and the Jews was a long-continued strife which had all the bitterness of a family quarrel; yet prejudice against work in Samaria would not be as great as against work in a land of the uncircumcised, and Jesus had expressly commanded it (1:8).

Philip, one of the Seven and known later as "the evangelist" (21:8), was the pioneer missionary to the

Samaritans. Fleeing from the persecution, he went down from Jerusalem to the capital city, Sebaste, and there preached Christ (8:5); and his message, accompanied with acts of healing, was received with much joy, and bore fruit in the baptism of a large number of men and women. When news of this work in Samaria reached the apostles at Jerusalem, they were deeply interested, because it was the entrance of the gospel into a new and only semi-Jewish field; and they sent Peter and John to get into touch with it. For the leaders of the church to do this, was a simple and most natural act; to construe it as a formal, episcopal visitation is to put the clothes of a man upon a creeping infant. The coming of the two apostles brought a further blessing. Philip had preached only the gospel of the Kingdom of God and Jesus the Messiah; now Peter and John gave the converts instruction about the Holy Spirit, and prayed that His gifts might be granted them. And when they laid their hands on those who had been baptized, some outward sign, probably the familiar one of speaking with tongues, gave assurance that the prayer was answered (8:17). Thus the infant church of Samaria had its Pentecost, and took its place beside the church in Jerusalem with evident divine endorsement.

Christianity had no sooner entered the outer world than it encountered in Simon Magus a representative of one of its great future foes. The magi,—of whom Elymas, also, was one (13:6),—must not be lightly regarded as mere imposters like our modern fortune-tellers; they were more like Cornelius Agrippa and other famous magicians of the Middle Ages, or like certain sorcerers in heathen lands to-day. They were the men of science of their time as well as masters of

black art, and they had gained certain secrets of Nature which they used along with much chicanery. Dealing with ignorant, credulous people they resorted to an inextricable mixture of science and superstition, drugs, herbs, charms, astrology, alchemy, hypnotism, mental suggestion and deliberate imposture, all inspired by conceit and selfishness. When we recall how kings as well as common people even in recent days have believed that such men possess more than mortal powers, we must agree with Ramsay that the magi "represented the strongest influence upon the human will that existed in the Roman world, an influence which must destroy or be destroyed by Christianity, if the latter tried to conquer the Roman world." Simon was doubtless a renegade Jew; and, if we are to judge from his claims and the name given him, "that Power of God which is called Great," he had accepted some form of that strange and multiform mixture of mysticism and perverted theology which we call gnosticism, —another future foe of the church. The preaching of Philip created in Simon a degree of belief which led him to be baptized; and the miracles of Philip were so much beyond his own magic as to fill him with amazement. But it was the mysterious descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles laid on their hands, that aroused his cupidity, and made him offer to purchase the secret for his own use. Here was a sin against the Holy Spirit of another type than that of Ananias,—a grasping after spiritual gifts and leadership in the church to gratify ambition and avarice. The scathing words with which Peter denounced it frightened Simon; but though he was urged to repent, there is no hint that he did, and later legends picture him as a bitter enemy of the church and as the father of

heresies. Indeed, out of these legends came the mediaeval story of Faust, the man who sold his soul to the devil.

4. The Eunuch From Ethiopia.

Ethiopia was a general term for the region south of Egypt; and the queens who ruled in Meroe, above the second cataract of the Nile, were all called Candace, just as the rulers of Egypt were all called Pharaoh. The Jewish religion had been brought to Ethiopia long before this time (Jeremiah's friend, Ebed-Melech, was an Ethiopian eunuch, Jere. 38:7 f.); and the present treasurer of the queen, a man of great authority, was a convert to it. Being a eunuch he could not gain admission into the Jewish fold (Deut. 23:1); but he could worship at the temple in the court of the Gentiles, and for this purpose he made the long journey to Jerusalem. It seems probable that there he became acquainted with Christians; for on his way home he was studying the passage in Isaiah most used by them to teach a crucified Messiah, and he was anxious to know who was described in it. He had journeyed as far as the deserted city, Old Gaza, and the hour was high noon, when Philip met him and volunteered the instruction he craved. Taking the Scripture passage as a text, the evangelist preached Jesus with such convincing power that, when they came to a pool of water, the eunuch put the question "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" He was not a Jew, and he could not become a Jew:—these for the brethren at Jerusalem were hindrances insurmountable. But Philip had seen the Holy Spirit bestowed upon Samaritans, and knew that the Spirit had guided him to this man; so without hesitation he broke through the barriers and bap-

tized him; and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Just how much of the supernatural was involved in Philip's coming to this seeker after truth, is a question hardly worth debating. Angels, i.e., messengers, of the Lord and promptings of the Spirit come in many ways to the true evangelist, and the recognition of them as such is made clear by obedience; but certainly nothing less than a most unusual experience could make Philip recognize that the eunuch might be baptized, so unprecedented was the act. Indeed, he seems to have kept what he had done a sacred secret until years later, perhaps until Paul and Luke were his guests at Caesarea (21:8). Tradition very naturally makes this eunuch to be the founder of the Christian church in Abyssinia; but we know nothing more about him, and we do know that missionary work in Ethiopia was not begun until the fourth century. The story of his conversion and baptism furnishes precedents of great value to present-day mission workers, but throws little light upon the history of the church. And for Philip it was merely an interlude in his extended work among the cities of Samaria (8:40).

5. The Case of Cornelius.

Peter and John not only had assisted Stephen in his work at Sebaste but had preached in many villages in Samaria on their way back to Jerusalem (8:25). Such interest in the Samaritans explains why presently we find Peter visiting the churches along the coast, founded possibly by Philip in his evangelistic tour from Azotus to Caesarea (8:40). At Lydda he healed a palsied man, Aeneas, and at Joppa he raised from her death-bed a prominent church worker, Tabitha,—two miracles closely resembling those of Jesus (Mk.

2:3 f.; 5:35 f.) and producing increase of faith among believers and a spread of the church in those regions. The work was so great that he abode in Joppa many days, making his home with Simon, a tanner. It is often pointed out that since the tanner's occupation involved ceremonial uncleanness and was much despised, Peter's choice of lodgings shows that he was learning to disregard Jewish restrictions. This might be true, had Peter originally been a Pharisee, but a Galilean fisherman would not be scrupulous about his quarters and companions. The statement that this Simon was a tanner serves in 10:5-6 to distinguish him from Simon Peter himself; perhaps that is all it is meant to do in 9:43.

All this time Christian work was slowly spreading in other regions,—in Galilee (9:31), Damascus (9:10), Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch (11:19), and probably elsewhere (26:11); but it was confined to the circumcised. Nevertheless, each advance made more impossible the ignoring of the question, What, if anything, can Gentiles do to obtain a share in the Messianic blessings? Upon the answer depended the future of Christianity,—whether it could develop into a universal religion or must remain an insignificant Jewish sect. Luke perceives that the case of Cornelius contains the answer; so he narrates it at great length. Here at Caesarea is a Roman centurion, well-known and highly respected (10:22), "a devout man and one that feared God," i.e., a half-way proselyte, who has not only accepted the great truths of Judaism himself but has won over to them his household, kinsmen and near friends (10:2, 7, 24). He has gone as far as Judaism will permit unless he becomes a full proselyte; will Christianity allow him to go further? Prob-

ably Cornelius had heard of the Christians and even of Peter's miracles in two places only some thirty miles away; possibly, also, Philip was now preaching in Caesarea. But Cornelius would be prejudiced against the new sect by what he learned in the synagogue; and it required a vision to make him send for the apostle. Peter, too, was full of prejudice, wrought into him from childhood, against all Gentiles; and before he would go to Cornelius, nothing doubting, he likewise had to learn by a vision that what God has cleansed man must not pronounce unclean. But though he went without doubting, he did not go without the precaution of taking six brethren with him as witnesses of what might befall; evidently he felt that the step he was taking was an important one which might bring on him grave censure, as in fact it did. The open-minded welcome of Cornelius and the story of his vision impressed Peter most favourably, though his words (10: 34-5) cannot be construed to mean that godly fear and righteous living are religion enough for any man—else why did he at once proceed to tell the story of the cross? What he recognized was that the grace of God is not confined to one special nation, and, therefore, the gospel may be preached to God-fearing Gentiles as well as to Jews. Peter's discourse to the group gathered by Cornelius contains a full story of the life of Jesus, a brief allusion to the prophets (Cornelius would know these from the synagogue service but would not regard them with Jewish reverence), and a promise of forgiveness of sins. It was not finished because, at this point, speaking with tongues gave evidence that the little assembly of Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The thought of the apostle went back to his own Day of Pentecost; and with such

clear indication that God had accepted these men, he commanded that they be baptized. This was done by the brethren who came with him,—was it because Peter wished them to become responsible for this new church, or did he—like Paul (I Cor. 1:17)—feel that baptism was a work for laymen, while the mission of apostles was to evangelize?

A report of what had taken place in Caesarea soon reached Jerusalem; and when Peter returned he found the stricter party of the church, "they that were of the circumcision," waiting to censure him; but after hearing the story from his own lips, "they held their peace, and glorified God," saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (11:2, 18). Nevertheless, the acquiescence and rejoicing were superficial and transient; no work among the Gentiles was undertaken by the Jerusalem church; and the whole battle over admitting the uncircumcised generally into the church was still in the future, when we shall find Peter himself uncertain which side to take in it. The general feeling now must have been that the case of Cornelius was exceptional, and its logical implications need not be considered. No one could foresee that before many years the Gentile Christians would bid fair to outnumber the Jewish; and it was not until they did begin to see this, that the party of circumcision roused to a protracted struggle against granting to Gentile believers freedom from the obligations of the Law, unrestricted intercourse with themselves, and a place of equal privilege and honour in the Kingdom. In other words, the battle was yet in the future, and with Paul instead of Peter as leader of the Gentile forces, by which they would gain liberty, fraternity and equality.

IV

THE EARLY LIFE OF PAUL

IN the group of apostles Paul stands forth as the central figure. This might be because we know most about him. Several of his letters have come down to us, and Luke devotes the larger half of Acts to his deeds; while little of the journeys, sufferings, and achievements of the other apostles has been recorded, and few of their writings remain. But Paul himself, when forced to boast, declares that he surpassed all the rest in labours, in prisons, in stripes, in deaths (II Cor. 11:23). His burning zeal, which showed itself when he persecuted the Christians as well as when he preached the faith of which he once made havoc (Gal. 1:23), would kindle self-reproach if any fellow-worker outdid him. And Paul had the advantage of education; his was the highest Jerusalem could offer, while the Twelve, being sons of humble folk, had been restricted to what the simple synagogue schools provided. Of course, this advantage should not be overestimated. Apollos was equally or more learned, but did not approach Paul in influence; and Paul tells us that his own speaking and message "were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Cor. 2:4). Nevertheless, a trained mind and a polished wit are mighty weapons when consecrated to Christ. Other endowments and acquirements also were his, as we shall see later, that would make him a leader wherever he might be; and

the great Gentile world, his chosen field, gave opportunity for successful work to the very limit of his ability. From the time he fairly enters it, the history of the Apostolic Age becomes in large measure the history of the Apostle Paul.

1. The Boy in Tarsus.

Paul was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia; and with justifiable pride he calls himself "a Tarsian" (22:3) and his birthplace "no mean city" (21:39). Situated on the main highway from Rome to the East, and accessible by the river Cydnus for Mediterranean boats, it was truly cosmopolitan; and, having schools that rivalled those of Athens and Alexandria, it was one of the famous cities of learning. The boy who grew up in such a place would have an outlook upon the world very different from that of a boy reared among the secluded hills of Palestine. In all his later thought and action Paul shows his city training. His letters reveal little of that love of nature and skill in drawing lessons from the fields and flocks which characterize the teachings of Jesus: he finds his illustrations rather in the great houses, the courts, the amphitheaters, the imperial guards, the triumphal processions and like features of city life. And in his journeys he ever seeks the cities, and loves to mingle with men in the crowded streets and market-places. There were many Jews in Tarsus, as in most large cities of Asia Minor; and Paul's ancestors, who were of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1), had lived there long, and had been given citizenship, perhaps as an inducement to settle there originally. In some unknown way, by distinguished service or by the payment of a great sum, they had gained Roman citizenship also (Acts

22:27),—a much higher distinction, prized and jealously guarded in the first century. In addition to honour and influence it brought three privileges of much use to Paul later, namely, trial by Roman courts, exemption from degrading punishments such as scourging (though a Jew could not claim this when before a Jewish tribunal), and under certain circumstances appeal to Caesar. A family thus distinguished and influential was probably wealthy. To be sure, Paul learned a trade in boyhood, but this was almost compulsory upon Jewish boys; the rabbis used to say, "If a man does not teach his son a trade, it is the same as if he did teach him to steal." When he became a Christian, Paul's family would cut him off; and then his trade, which was weaving cloth of coarse goats' hair for tents, proved a means of support for himself and sometimes for his companions (18:3; 20:34). As a Jew the boy was given a Jewish name, Saul, once borne by the king who was of his tribe; and as a Roman citizen he had also a Roman name of which we know only what seems to be the cognomen, Paul. Professor Ramsay suggestively remarks, "If we could think of him sometimes as Gaius Julius Paulus,—to give him a possible and even not improbable name,—how completely would our view of him be transformed!" He used his Roman name only when he was among the Gentiles; but, as it is more familiar to us, we shall use it in the whole story of his life.

Paul's parents were Pharisees, and the boy from the first lived as such (23:6; 26:5). A Pharisee in a Gentile city could not observe the Law as strictly as in Jerusalem,—the standards must be lowered somewhat; but of two facts in Paul's boyhood we may be sure. First, as the son of a Pharisee he was carefully

shielded from heathen life and influences. Boys came from a distance to attend the university at Tarsus, but he would not be allowed to enter any except a Jewish school. Yet, as a part of his preparation for life in a Gentile land, he did learn to use Greek, and doubtless as a Roman citizen knew some Latin, though Hebrew was the language of his home. And he could not but absorb somewhat of the Greek culture which surrounded him. Tarsus was a center of Stoic philosophy; and parallels between the thought of Paul and of the famous Stoic, Seneca, have often been pointed out. Second, as a Pharisee Paul would devote his days, even in childhood, to memorizing and putting into practice the Law, both the written and the oral, even to minutest details. It was an exacting and seemingly dreary occupation; but the zeal and devotion with which, as he repeatedly testifies, he pursued it, changed it to a delight and carried him forward beyond many of his own age (Gal. 1:14). Jewish home life surpassed that of all other nations in the loving companionship of husband and wife and the tender care of parents for children; yet we cannot but wonder if something of his own experience in childhood prompted Paul to enjoin, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. * * * Fathers, provoke not your children that they be not discouraged" (Col. 3:19, 21). Did the rigid demands of Pharisaism with its emphasis of constant self-discipline so check his father's manifestation of affection as to cast a shadow over the household?

2. The Young Man in Jerusalem.

At the age of fifteen, or whenever he had advanced as far as the Jewish teachers in Tarsus could take him,

Paul was sent to Jerusalem, where a sister lived (at least, her son did later, 23:16), to sit as a pupil at the feet of Gamaliel (22:3). This grandson of the famous Hillel was "had in honour of all the people" (5:34) as one of the best and broadest-minded of the great rabbis. His attitude toward the Christians (5:34-40) has already been noticed; and his liberality in other matters, such as approving the study of Greek literature, scandalized his stricter brethren. Possibly Paul's father selected him for his son, recognizing that the lad needed a teacher who would restrain rather than increase a tendency towards narrowness and bigotry; certainly we may see divine guidance in placing the future apostle to Gentiles under such a rabbi. Here Paul lived and studied for several years, being, as he says, "instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers" (22:3), and becoming most thoroughly a Hebrew (II Cor. 11:22). The influence of his rabbinical training is evident in his letters. A rabbi guided his pupils in an exhaustive study of the Jewish scriptures, searching for hidden meanings, emphasizing minute differences, using allegory and legend in illustration. So Paul is teaching like a rabbi when he finds a significant difference between "seed" and "seeds" (Gal. 3:16), or makes Mount Sinai typify Jerusalem (Gal. 4:25), or uses the legend of the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert furnishing water (I Cor. 10:4).

Absurd as some of the rabbinical instruction seems to us, the teaching of such a man as Gamaliel with such a text-book as the Old Testament must have been inspiring and profitable. It made Paul intimately familiar with the high visions of prophets, the spiritual experiences of psalmists, and the wonderful priv-

ileges of his people, "whose is the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the service of God and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh" (Rom. 9:4 f.). Though his life-work was among the Gentiles and he was increasingly hated by the Jews, his love for his own nation never ceased; and his pride in their past lent intensity to his desire for their present salvation. There is no stronger expression in all his writings than his cry, "I could pray that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). If we judge from his later years, Paul was not only a diligent learner, he was also an independent and original thinker. And with him to know was to do; his will was set on perfect obedience to the Law; and his success was such that, when reviewing these years long afterwards, he could pronounce himself "as touching the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless" (Phil. 3:6). Also, there burned within him the desire to bring others to like acceptance and obedience. "Even before his conversion," says McGiffert, "he desired to be not merely a rabbi but a missionary," to prepare his own nation for the coming of the Messiah, and to win other nations to acceptance of the Jewish faith. In this he was a true son of the Pharisees, concerning whom Jesus said, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte" (Matt. 23:15).

Paul remained in Jerusalem until he had completed his studies under Gamaliel,—three years, at least, and probably several more; then naturally he returned to Tarsus, there to live and teach as a rabbi, though he would not be allowed to head a rabbinical school until he was forty years old. As a citizen of Tarsus he

must have felt the responsibilities and exercised the duties that belonged to citizenship, and have acquired the knowledge of civic life which lies behind his command, "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:7). And as a Roman citizen he could not but exult in the greatness and power and discipline of his empire, and gain from Rome that conception of a unity of all life under one great head which later on he transferred to the empire of Christ. Though he knew it not, Paul even in Tarsus, was being trained for world-wide evangelism. "Modern life," says Robertson, "is chiefly a blend of the Jewish contribution to religion, the Greek contribution to culture, and the Roman contribution to government;" and in Paul these three were combined. His advice about marriage and woman's obedience to her husband and her part in church services, has made some readers curious as to just what his experiences with the other sex had been. That he had no wife when he wrote I Cor. 7:8 seems evident, but that he had never been married is highly improbable; marriage was a sacred duty for a Jew, and no young rabbi would neglect it. We may be fairly certain that Paul in his apostolic days was a widower; but whether we go further and, as some have done, surmise that his matrimonial experience had been distasteful or distressing, depends upon how much bitterness we seem to find in his words concerning women and marriage.

Though attendance at the annual feasts in the temple was not obligatory upon Jews living at a distance, probably Paul went up to Jerusalem often, for he was zealous in keeping the law; but he seems to have met neither John the Baptist nor Jesus during their brief

public ministries. What he learned from others about the Christians would come from hostile sources; and his first direct encounter with them probably was when, having come to Jerusalem for worship or on business, he listened to Stephen speaking in the synagogue of the Cilicians. Aroused by what he heard this follower of Jesus teach, the zealous young rabbi engaged in disputation with him; and when worsted in this, did his utmost to stir up persecution, thinking that verily he did God service (26:9). In the fierce scenes that followed he was the fanatical leader; he took the whole blame upon himself afterwards (Gal. 1:13; I Cor. 15:9), and Luke seems to indicate that as soon as he was converted the persecution ceased (9:31). If this be a correct reconstruction of his history, it settles that he was not a member of the Sanhedrin; for as such he would have resided in Jerusalem or its vicinity, and must have known the counsel of Gamaliel and the law-abiding life of the Christians, both of which would moderate his rage. Moreover, though the term "a young man" is indefinite, Paul could hardly have been old enough at Stephen's death to hold a place in that most honoured assembly of the elders of Israel. His statement concerning the martyrs, "When they were put to death, I gave my vote against them" (26:10), means only that he heartily endorsed the action, as was shown in his conduct at the stoning of Stephen, where indeed there seems to have been no formal vote but only frenzied popular acclamation. After the persecution started he was given some official appointment for its prosecution (9:1 f.), and in this way was connected with the Sanhedrin; and we may be sure that his learning, ability and tireless labours would some day have been rewarded by election to full membership, had he not become a

Christian. This brilliant future was one of the gains he counted loss for Christ (Phil. 3:7).

3. From Persecutor to Penitent.

The conversion of Paul has been set forth by some as a proof of the supernatural, second only to the resurrection of Jesus; others explain it as a most natural change in an emotional and excited person. The first group of writers picture Paul firm in his convictions, unrelenting in his rage against Christians, then suddenly turned about and completely transformed by meeting the risen Lord. The second group maintain that Paul, though outwardly firm against Christianity, was inwardly troubled and almost persuaded to accept it; and in this spiritual state of unstable equilibrium some purely natural event,—a thunderstorm, a sunstroke, or a fancy of his heated brain,—was enough to make him think he saw Jesus and to cause his conversion. It is, therefore, important to consider carefully just what did take place as the heresy-hunter drew nigh to Damascus. Fortunately, besides several references to it in Paul's writings, we have three accounts in Acts,—one by Luke writing as an historian, one by Paul propitiating a Jewish mob who thought him a religious renegade, and the third by Paul addressing a Roman ruler and a grandson of Herod the Great, two educated sceptics. The three accounts differ in emphasis according to their purpose, and also in certain minor details which by a little ingenuity can be harmonized, and which so careful an historian as Luke would not have left unexplained, had he regarded them as discrepancies.

Paul, the persecutor, bound for Damascus with authority to arrest and bring to Jerusalem all men or women who were "of the Way," was—according to his

own statement—a most strict Pharisee who was laying waste the church in all good conscience but in ignorance and unbelief. There was no doubt in his mind that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus" (26:9),—in other words, that in every possible way he ought to assail those who proclaimed as Messiah one against whom the wrath of God had been clearly shown by His crucifixion. Did not the Scripture expressly state, "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23, cf. Gal. 3:13)? And if the curse of God was upon this false Messiah, it must likewise be upon all who accepted him, no matter how seemingly blameless their lives and attractive their teachings. But though Paul had no qualms about persecuting the Christians, he tells us in Romans 7:7-25, which is taken as a record of his own spiritual state at this very time, that he was wretched, restless, almost in despair because, while as a Pharisee he believed that righteousness could be gained only by perfect obedience to the Law, experience was increasingly proving that such obedience was utterly beyond human ability. Even if by intense and constant effort he should meet all the outward demands of the Law, there still remained the inward demands, such as that of the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," impossible for sinful human nature. He says, "To will is present with me, but to work that which is good is not;" and this hopeless contradiction creates a despair that makes him cry, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death?" Perhaps it was the goad of this spiritual unrest that drove him to persecute the Christians so fiercely, hoping thereby to find peace of mind.

To one tormented as Paul was, there must have been

something wonderfully attractive in the declaration of the Christians that through their Prince and Saviour past sins might be blotted out, and the Holy Spirit be given for aid in righteous living (2:38; 3:19; 5:31-32). This had been stated powerfully by Stephen in those unforgetable disputations, and proclaimed even more effectively in the peace, joy and assurance of God's favour which he and other Christians evidently enjoyed, and which Paul so lacked and craved. And when Stephen was put to the final test, there was no retraction:—he stood before his accusers with a face radiant as that of an angel; he looked up with rejoicing from their fury to the welcome of his Lord; and he died with a prayer that his murderers might be forgiven. Though Paul could not recognize it until later, Stephen was his spiritual father; the mantle of the first martyr fell upon his shoulders, even as the garments of the witnesses were laid at his feet. Probably the journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, which took nearly a week, was the first opportunity since the persecution began, for him to think quietly upon these things. Yet mere meditation could not change his purpose, nor any process of logic bring him to the truth, because every line of thought about Christianity ended with a crucified Messiah,—an absurd, monstrous, revolting fact. The pride of the Jew—and Jews were the proudest race on earth—rested on the expectation of a Messiah who would be monarch of the whole world, and bring to dust the arrogant Roman rulers. To accept instead a Galilean carpenter whose short life had ended most ignominiously, was humiliation unspeakable. To be sure, the Christians removed this stumbling-block by declaring that Jesus had returned to them triumphant over death, had walked and talked and eaten and drunk with

them, and then like Enoch and Elijah had been taken deathless to heaven whence He would return to reign in triumph. But this story seemed to Paul utterly incredible, most preposterous. Yet Stephen had set his life as a seal to the truth of it! And if it were true, what then?

Only as we understand Paul's mental and spiritual attitude, can we determine what happened as he drew nigh to Damascus. That which suddenly confronted him was not the fancy of a heated brain, for it was unexpected, undesired, unimaginable. Nor was it wholly an inward vision, such as Paul beheld more than once in later years (18:9; 22:18, et al.). His statement that it was the good pleasure of God "to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:16) is often quoted to prove the contrary; but Paul there is speaking of the revelation of Christ, not to him inwardly, but in him to others during the years that followed, when he could truly say of his life, "It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul needed something that would remove his utter unbelief in the apostles' testimony that Jesus had come back to them from the grave by a resurrection which declared Him to be the Son of God. An inward vision would not do this; it would only prove that Jesus lived in the spirit world; and Paul as a Pharisee already believed in life after death. To accept the story of the apostles he, like Thomas, must have some sort of physical proof. Jesus, glorious as Stephen had seen Him, yet truly in the flesh and bearing marks of the crucifixion as the apostles had testified,—this was the manifestation Paul needed; and, wonderful and hard to realize though the fact may be, it was granted him. His companions were aware only of a light brighter than the midday sun, but to Paul

was given a brief but overwhelming and blinding vision of the divine form; and while the others heard only a meaningless sound, Paul's ear caught the words, spoken in the language of his childhood, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The question, "Who art thou, Lord?" is his last struggle of unbelief; with the answer to it, doubt and opposition vanish; and in full surrender, yet with the old Pharisaic emphasis upon deeds, Paul asks, "What shall I do, Lord?" The reply is brief,—Paul is in no condition to grasp more than the next step,—"Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee." And when the bright light has vanished, his companions lift the fallen, blinded man to his feet, and lead him by the hand into the city,—no longer a persecutor but a bewildered penitent. "The power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10) has swept away his unbelief, and left forever clear and firm his faith that Jesus is indeed the Son of God (Rom. 1:4).

In later years Paul placed his sight of Jesus in the list of resurrection appearances (I Cor. 15:8); he never doubted its reality, and he pointed to it in proof of his claim to be an apostle (Id. 9:1; cf. Gal. 1:1), able as the others to bear witness to the resurrection. Yet he felt that he had come into the apostolic circle as one prematurely born comes into the world (Id. 15:8). The Twelve had slowly but normally developed in Christian knowledge, at first under the teachings of Jesus and afterwards under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; despite many things for which they reproached themselves, they recalled with pleasure and ever-increasing gratitude the wondrous days of loving companionship with Jesus and the lessons learned at His feet; they had begun with a Master whom they knew to be human, and had ended with a Lord whom they recog-

nized to be divine. In Paul all this process was exactly reversed:—he had been suddenly translated out of the bitter bondage of the Law into the glorious liberty of the children of God; his past had a record he longed to forget but found facing him again and again as he met those who had cruelly suffered at his hands in the old, sad days of persecution; and his first revelation was of the risen Lord who reigns in glory,—later years were to bring a knowledge of the Master who taught in Palestine. The theology of any man, if vital enough to be called "my gospel," is that portion of the immeasurable expanse of divine truth which his own experience fits him to behold. Can we wonder, then, that Paul in his teaching gives the central place to certain truths that are only on the horizon of the thought of the Twelve? Indeed, his whole theology, as he sets it forth in his epistles, is only a full statement of what was involved in his conversion.

4. The Disciple at Damascus.

For three days, the longest in his life, Paul sat in darkness overwhelmed with self-reproach and bewilderment. The persecution of the Christians, which he had proudly believed to be his supremest service to God, now weighed upon him as hideous mistake and irreparable injury. The path he had so confidently trodden was completely blocked, and he waited in blindness to learn his future course. Even the barrier between himself and the other believers had not been broken through; he was living in the house of a Jew called Judas in the street called Straight, whither his companions had brought him, and the little band of disciples, who knew that he was on the way or had already arrived, were dreading his next movement. As in the case of Cor-

nelius, it required a double message given in divine visions to break the barrier down. Ananias, a leading disciple and "a devout man according to the Law, well reported of by all the Jews who dwelt there," was sent to bear to Paul both physical and spiritual sight; and the gift of the Holy Spirit and baptism followed his words. Doubtless Ananias gave him some instruction in Christian truth, though Paul indignantly denies the charge that he received his gospel from him (Gal. 1:12).

Just how far his future mission as apostle to Gentiles was now made clear to Paul is an interesting question. In his speech to Agrippa he seems to put his apostolic commission in the lips of Jesus at the time of his conversion; but by comparing the other accounts we see that he is assigning to that hour of conversion all the light upon his future course which he slowly gained afterwards. Certainly one so devoted to the Law as Ananias could not conceive that salvation without the Law would be preached by Paul, even if it was revealed to him that Paul was selected by the Lord to proclaim the Messiah before Gentiles and kings (9:15). As for Paul himself the difference between a Jewish Messiah and a Saviour of the world was too great for one trained as a rabbi to grasp at first; and it took the vision in the temple (22:17 f.) to force him away from his work among the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea. Nevertheless, his conversion led logically to his becoming a missionary to the Gentiles. His previous view of Christ as accursed, would help him to realize that the realm of Christ is outside that of the Law. His own salvation, granted when he was "a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious" (I Tim. 1:13) was clearly of grace and not of works; and grace sufficient to save

him was sufficient to save Gentile as well as Jew. Henceforth when the world asked what Christ could do for sinners, he could point to what He had done for him, the greatest sinner of all (I Tim. 1:15). More than this, Paul in later years, when looking back over his course, could see that from his very infancy he was being divinely fitted for his life-work. The inheritance of Hebrew blood and Roman citizenship, the childhood training in a great and cosmopolitan heathen city, the teaching of such a rabbi as Gamaliel, the intense personal experience of the power and weakness of the Law,—all these were a preparation for the task to which he was called by God who set him apart, even before his birth, that he might preach Christ among the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15-16).

V

PAUL PREACHING THE FAITH

DAMASCUS, a city old when Abraham was young, lay on the very border of the Roman empire, and was at times ruled by the Arab kings of Petra. If Paul came there in 31 or 32 A.D., it was then under the Romans,—so the coins of the city indicate. Its relations with Jerusalem were so intimate that many Jews made it their home; and Josephus says the Gentile women of the city were greatly interested in the Jewish religion,—a credible statement since Judaism attracted Gentile women by its freedom from licentiousness and its exaltation of the sex; and if they became proselytes the burden of the Law was less heavy upon them than upon men. Into the synagogue in any foreign city they came as devout worshippers; and through their influence over husbands and friends they often gained favours for the Jews (13:50). In Damascus a group of Jews and proselytes were now Christians; some possibly had met Jesus during His public ministry (Matt. 4:24), some may have heard Peter at Pentecost, and some perhaps had fled from Jerusalem after Stephen's death (Acts 9:13). It is easy to see how a Christian church sprang up here; but nothing reveals its size or its development in doctrine.

Luke tells us that as soon as Paul was baptized, "straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God" (9:20). We could expect this. Paul was too energetic to remain quiet, and penitence would spur him on. The synagogues were open

to him, for the relations between Jews and Christians in Damascus were still friendly; and his fame as a persecutor, when joined with the startling story of his conversion, would make men curious to hear him. But Paul was hastening as a herald before he had fully gained his message,—a not uncommon mistake. The sight of the glorious, risen Lord had convinced him that Jesus was the Messiah, and he could proclaim this truth with power, but nothing more, since he had grasped nothing more,—the creed of a new convert is always a very short one. And so his preaching bore little fruit except amazement in those who listened to him. Indeed, it was not easy for Paul to lay hold on the gospel he was to preach. He could not, like Peter, simply add faith in Jesus to his former religious belief, for that proud structure of Pharisaism had been smitten to the dust. Now what should be reared in its place? What could he answer concerning the work of Christ, when his hearers hurled objections, or his own heart whispered difficulties? Though his preaching in the synagogues went on for "certain days" (9:19-20), we are not surprised to find that, when telling what followed his conversion, he counts this period of so little value as to say, "Straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood, but I went away into Arabia" (Gal. 1:16 f.). Jesus sought the wilderness of Judea to prepare in solitude for His public ministry; and for the same purpose Paul went out into the loneliness of the Arabian desert,—not necessarily far from Damascus, however, for the desert came up almost to the city gates. How long he stayed there, how he lived, what spiritual struggles and ecstasies were his, he does not disclose. He points back to this sacred chapter of his life to prove only "as touching the gospel which was preached by

me, that it is not after man, for neither did I receive it from a man nor was I taught it; but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). In these months of deepest meditation Jesus was unveiling Himself to the man who had asked "Who art thou, Lord?"; and Paul was slowly gaining the truths that he calls "my gospel," of which the very central one is, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul in the desert was not a student of divinity fashioning a creed dry as the sands themselves; he was a mystic, communing with the divine, hearing words unspeakable, and merging his life in the life of the Crucified.

After Arabia Paul returned again to Damascus. And the effect of the desert days is revealed in Luke's statement (Acts 9:22) that he increased the more in strength, and was now able not only to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God but to prove that He is the Christ, and instead of merely amazing the Jews, to confound them even as Stephen once had confounded him. This second period of preaching in Damascus continued "many days" (9:23) until three years in all (31-34 A.D.) had passed since Paul's conversion (Gal. 1:18). The new force in his preaching at last aroused the hostility of the Jews to the point of seeking to kill him. They had special opportunity to accomplish this when the city in 34 A.D. was transferred to the control of the Arab king, Aretas, because his representative would be desirous to hold the favour of its numerous Jewish population. If Paul were brought before the ethnarch on any charge trumped up by them, his condemnation

was certain. That a charge had been made, and an order for his arrest issued, is shown by the statement that the gates of the city were watched day and night to prevent his escape (Acts 9: 20-25; II Cor. 11: 32 f.). Terrified by his danger, Paul's disciples forced him to flee; and he was lowered in a basket through a window over the wall at night, and then made his way back to Jerusalem. In later years he reckoned this flight, or else this way of fleeing, a weakness (II Cor. 11: 30); though why, it is hard to say.

2. In Jerusalem and Judea.

Up to this time Paul could have known very little about the earthly ministry of his Lord; and he tells us (Gal. 1: 18) that his object in now going to Jerusalem was to see, i.e., to interview, Peter, the apostle who was the recognized leader of the Twelve, and who best of all could tell him what Jesus had said and done. But an evil reputation dies slowly; and when Paul reached Jerusalem, the disciples feared he was hiding some scheme of persecution under a pretended conversion, and would have barred him from their circle had it not been for Barnabas, one of the noblest figures in the Apostolic Age, "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (11: 24), generous in his sympathies and well meriting his name, "son of consolation." Tradition says he like Paul had been a pupil of Gamaliel; so, as a lad from Cyprus, he may have known the lad from Tarsus, and felt sure that deception by him was impossible. At any rate, he now came forward as sponsor and gained for Paul a kindly reception from Peter and James, the brother of Jesus, the only heads of the church just then in the city. For fifteen days Paul was the guest of Peter, with eager desire and

abundant opportunity to become well-informed about the life and teachings of Jesus,—a fact strangely overlooked by those who picture him as wholly ignorant of the real Jesus because he never met Him in His earthly years. Such ignorance is incredible when we realize that not only now but again and again in his later years Paul was in closest contact with men who had shared the earthly life of his Lord, and could tell him far more than what is recorded in our gospels. This full fortnight of companionship must also have created an intimacy and confidence between Peter and Paul that should not be forgotten when we consider their later relations. Peter seems to have been called away at the close of the fifteen days; but Paul stayed on, determined most characteristically to bear witness to Christ where once he had persecuted His disciples both in Jerusalem and in all Judea (9:28; 26:20). He strove specially to break down the unbelief of his fellow Hellenists; but his disputations with them,—perhaps in the same synagogue where once he had disputed with Stephen,—only stirred their wrath until they were ready to bring Stephen's fate upon him. The brethren recognized his danger; but Paul would not believe that his testimony for Christ could be rejected by those who knew so well his former deeds as a persecutor; and he was determined not to be coaxed or driven into fleeing from enemies a second time. Just at this critical hour, however, he fell into a trance when praying in the temple, and received from his Lord the revelation that further work in Jerusalem would be fruitless, and also the direct command, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (22:17 f.). With duty thus made clear, he hastened to leave Judea; and the brethren took him to Caesarea whence he sailed to his

old home, Tarsus. What sort of welcome awaited him there from his stern old Pharisaic father, we can easily imagine!

3. In Syria and Cilicia.

We come now to a great gap in the record of Paul's life. If his two visits to Jerusalem, mentioned in Galatians, are both dated from his conversion, as seems likely, it extends over about nine years (fourteen years less the three in Damascus and Arabia, the months in Jerusalem, and the later year or more in Antioch, 11:26); but all we know about it is his brief statement that he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and that the churches in Judea, though they never saw him during this period, kept hearing with joy that their former persecutor was now preaching the faith he once persecuted (Gal. 1:21-23). Even if he had not told us, we might be sure that Paul was working for Christ; he would not and could not be idle. Probably many of the hardships and perils catalogued in II Cor. 11:23, were undergone during this period; and he assigns to it one (or were there two?) of his most wonderful and incommunicable spiritual experiences (II Cor. 12:1-4). Also, there was the beginning of some physical infirmity,—the "thorn in the flesh,"—which henceforth humbled but did not hinder him. These unrecorded years must have been so rich in thought and experience that when he went forth with Barnabas on what we call his first missionary journey,—a misleading term,—he was not a novice but a trained and tried worker in the mission field. How fruitful his work was, we can only conjecture; the churches in Syria and Cilicia, mentioned in Acts 15:23, 41, were probably founded by him during this time.

It is thought by some that this period in Paul's life was left a blank because he had not yet realized the liberty of believers, and was still acting "as if the door of the synagogue was the portal through which the nations must find their way into the church" (Ramsay). But Paul had been sent to Gentiles by Jesus in the temple vision; his churches in Syria and Cilicia, if they were his, contained Gentiles (15:23); and Barnabas found him ready to work in the largely Gentile church of Antioch. We may be sure, however, that he preached to Jews as well as to Gentiles,—he always did, if they would listen; indeed, it is probable that his Gentile preaching now was confined to the devout fearers of God who worshipped in the synagogues. Paul's perception of the freedom in Christ from all bondage to the Law would be gained by degrees; truths great and revolutionary are not grasped in a moment. The emphasis that Luke puts upon the day in Pisidian Antioch when Paul and Barnabas said "We turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46), indicates that then was the beginning of Gentile work independent of the synagogue and of the Jewish restrictions that Gentiles must accept if they would worship in the synagogue. Even so, the Jews, who did not admit devout Gentiles into full membership unless they were circumcised, would be roused to hostility if they heard Paul offer the gospel to any Gentiles on the same terms as to themselves; and doubtless during this period he was more than once brought before the court of some synagogue, and after due trial sentenced to forty stripes less one (II Cor. 11:24). But how about the brethren in Jerusalem,—wedded as they were to the Law, would they find in him occasion for praising God (Gal. 1:24), if they knew he was offering Christ without the Law to

Gentiles, even if only to the devout? Possibly they did not know what he was preaching, having received only general reports of his activity in the gospel; or possibly the effect of Peter's experience with Cornelius had not wholly died away:—the Jewish Christians grew more bitter against Gentiles as years went on and Roman procurators were increasingly oppressive. And after all, Paul's work would not receive much attention:—though he had pushed out into the larger field, he had not yet become the leader in it, nor entered upon his great struggle against those who would place the yoke of the Law upon all Gentile believers.

4. Paul at Antioch.

At the northeast corner of the Mediterranean where the great caravans from the East met the merchant vessels from the West, stood Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman world, a capital of the province of Syria, cosmopolitan in the highest degree, wealthy, luxury-loving and licentious. It was full of Jews, for its founder had offered them special inducements to settle there; and Josephus says that many of the Greeks had been won over to Judaism. Nicolaus, one of the Seven (6:5), we remember, was a proselyte of Antioch. Such intimacy between Jew and Gentile paved the way for the gospel to pass from the one to the other. Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome,—these three cities are the stepping stones along which Christianity went forward from its Jewish cradle to Gentile missions and thence to world dominion.

Christian teachers, driven from Jerusalem when Stephen was martyred, travelled northward along the coast to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch speaking the word to Jews only; but later there came to Antioch

certain evangelists who made bold to offer the gospel of the Lord Jesus to—whom? The answer to this question is important because on it rests the whole point of the narrative. Many manuscripts, followed by the King James version, say Hellenists, i.e., Greek-speaking Jews; but this is absurd, for the church was already full of Hellenists, and the evangelists themselves, being from Cyprus and Cyrene, were doubtless Hellenists. Other manuscripts and the Revised Version say Greeks; this seems correct, but who are meant by Greeks? Apparently those God-fearing Gentiles to whom the synagogues were open; Luke seems in general to use the term Greeks for them, and the term Gentiles for the other heathen (e.g., 14:1-2; 18:4; 13:46; 14:27). The Jews would not admit these Greeks into full membership of the synagogue unless they were circumcised; but the evangelists at Antioch dared to offer them Christ without the Law. Peter had done this with Cornelius; and Luke puts the preaching at Antioch immediately after his account of the conversion of Cornelius because the one followed the other logically as well as chronologically. Out of the labours of these two bands of missionaries grew a church in Antioch made up of both Jews and Greeks, and gradually it grew to such a size as to attract the attention of the church at Jerusalem and make them send Barnabas to it. Their selection of him shows that they were not disposed to censure this new phase of Christian work, since by character as well as by birth (4:36) he might be expected to sympathize with it; and he seems to have been sent as a helper rather than as an inspector, for he did not return to Jerusalem to make a report. His coming was truly a great help, and under his hearty approval and exhortation the church increased until another helper

was needed. Then, feeling sure from what he had seen of Paul in Jerusalem and heard about him since, that he was the fit man, Barnabas went to Tarsus to learn his whereabouts, and having sought and found him, brought him to Antioch. There for fully a year they laboured together most successfully, and thus developed that mutual understanding and sympathy which fitted them to be yoke-fellows in a future mission tour.

Luke notes that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. The outsiders gave them this name; and the invention of it shows that the new movement was being talked about, and its distinctness from Judaism noticed. These men, so the Antiochans reasoned, who call themselves disciples, brethren, believers, the elect, saints, cannot be a Jewish sect because they admit uncircumcised Gentiles into their communion; and they cannot be a Gentile sect, else Jews would not join them:—what then are they? They profess to be followers of a certain Jesus whom they call the Christ; very good, since they are forever preaching about this Christ, let us call them Christians. It was a name applied in ridicule (cf. 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16), like Quaker, Puritan, Methodist; and like these was borne by men who glorified God in that name until the name itself became glorious. At the outset it seems to have been specially a name for Gentile converts, and not applied to Jewish believers until later; an early fragment speaks of "Christians and Jews confessing Christ" (Harnack).

During the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) there were scanty harvests and severe famines in various parts of the Roman empire. Josephus tells that Palestine was famine-stricken about A.D. 45, and that Helena, a queen and proselyte who came to Jerusalem for worship, sent

to Egpyt for food and distributed it among the suffering. A similar work of relief was put through by the church at Antioch. Having been warned of the impending famine by Agabus, a prophet who came with others from Jerusalem, they raised a fund—perhaps at the suggestion of Barnabas whose generosity had been shown earlier (Acts 4: 36 f.),—and, in accordance with this "revelation" (Gal. 2:2), when the cry of hunger came, sent food by Barnabas and Paul to the stricken brethren in Judea. This generous expression of sympathy was doubly helpful to the church in Jerusalem because just before the famine they had passed through an hour of anguish. In 44 A.D. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great and now entrusted by the Romans with all his domain, put to death James, the brother of John. On what grounds he did this, we do not know; but he was enough of a Jew to hate the Christians, and enough of a diplomat to wish to please the Pharisees who were now in high power. Next he imprisoned Peter, intending to put him to death after the Passover; but the apostle was released from prison by a miracle, and saved his life by flight. The speedy death of Herod (12: 20-23) stopped the persecution; Peter was able to return, and the church resumed its normal life; yet the death of James remained a source of perplexity and consternation as well as of sorrow. Until this tragedy they had taken for granted that Jesus would soon come, and the apostles would care for the flock until He came; but now that one of the Twelve was dead, what should they think about the future? Their whole scheme of time and work before the coming of the Lord must be reconstructed,—who could say how?

5. The Case of Titus.

At the famine visit we place an important episode, told by Paul in his letter to the Galatians (2: 1-10),—the controversy over Titus. That it was at this time and not during the later council visit (Acts 15: 2 f.) seems evident when we consider the purpose for which Paul tells it. His enemies in Galatia had declared that his gospel was an imperfect one, gained at second hand from the apostles and not directly from Jesus; so to refute this slander he recounts his visits to Jerusalem before he preached to the Galatians, and tells what he received from the apostles at each visit. He needs to say nothing about the council visit, because that took place after he had first visited Galatia; but to keep silent about the famine visit would have been a fatal omission, for his enemies would certainly point it out against him. On the other hand, Luke says nothing about the case of Titus because the case of Cornelius, which he reports so fully, covers the same ground. Indeed, for some inexplicable reason Luke nowhere in his narrative mentions Titus.

When Barnabas and Paul came with food for the famishing brethren they delivered it to the elders, but naturally remained to aid in its distribution (11: 30; 12: 25). From Antioch they had brought with them Titus, one of Paul's Gentile converts (Titus 1: 4) who, judging from glimpses of his later career (II Cor. 7: 6 f.; 8: 16 f.; Titus 1: 5), was an able assistant and a fine representative of Gentile Christians. While the majority of the church received him without question, certain influential members ("false brethren," Paul calls them because they lacked the spirit of Christ), the same or of the same party who assailed Peter for eating

with Cornelius (11:2), abhorred him because he was a Gentile. They seem to have resorted to sly and contemptible ways of discovering whether Paul and Barnabas treated him as a brother, and then to have gone to the apostles demanding that if he were to be admitted into the Christian brotherhood, he must first become a Jew by submitting to circumcision. The apostles agreed to this, as the easiest way to preserve harmony, and with a show of authority insisted that Barnabas and Paul agree to it. For the moment it looked as if a few narrow-minded men would put an end to "our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 2:4),—a tragedy repeated many times since apostolic days. The treachery of these sneaking brethren and the truckling of the apostles made Paul thoroughly indignant;—he cannot write about the matter years afterwards without being stirred afresh. And the case of Titus involved the whole work among the Gentiles and the truth of the gospel itself; for, if the apostles and the church in Jerusalem insisted that to become a Christian a Gentile must first become a Jew, the message that through faith all men may become sons of God in Christ Jesus would be discredited, and the conversion of the Gentiles hindered so much that Paul might well fear he would be running or had run in vain (Id. 2:2).

Promptly rousing to the defence of his convert, Paul gave, possibly in some public meeting, a statement of the gospel he preached among the Gentiles, and then took up the case of Titus in a private conference with the three leaders of the church, James, the brother of Jesus, Peter and John. The discussion must have been long, anxious and perhaps heated; but the call of Paul to go to the Gentiles and the grace that had been given him, both in his own spiritual experiences and in

the fruits already reaped in Gentile lands, could not be denied (Id. 2:9); and the lessons Peter had learned in the case of Cornelius were not forgotten. Accordingly it was agreed that Titus need not be circumcised,—in other words, since his was really a test case, that Gentiles could be Christians without shouldering the burden of the Law. The decision was momentous,—so important that some declare that, had it not been reached, the Christians would never have been more than a small Jewish sect. This is too strong a statement. The gospel seed had now been planted in Gentile soil, and had a power of life and growth independent of the church at Jerusalem. But certainly the immediate progress of Christianity and its whole future course hinged on the decision, though doubtless the apostles and probably Paul himself could not yet clearly see this.

The decision in the case of Titus was a triumph for Paul. But it was not accepted by the whole church; the "false brethren" and their party still refused to admit that uncircumcised Gentiles could be true Christians, and sought opportunity to bring them under the Law. Moreover, as in the case of Cornelius, some most important questions were left unanswered. If Gentile Christians need not keep the Law, must Jewish Christians keep it? The church at Jerusalem would not raise this question; they took for granted that a Jew was not released from obedience to the Law when he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. Paul did not care to raise it; he was concerned only for his Gentile converts; though had he been asked, his answer would have been, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision: let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called" (Gal. 5:6; I Cor. 7:18-20). Again, if Gentiles are received into the

church without circumcision, how can a Jewish Christian associate with them? This question was ignored because the Gentile field seemed far away, and Barnabas and Paul were restricted to it. Once more, though a Gentile Christian need not keep the Law, is he as good a Christian as if he did keep it? If he is not, then the Law may be enjoined upon him as a means of perfection, though not as an essential of salvation. Evidently the decision concerning Titus had by no means ended all possible dispute, nor fully determined the status of the Gentile Christians; by it Paul had gained for them liberty, but not yet fraternity or equality. The struggle for these was yet to come.

The discussion that arose over Titus resulted in another important decision. Paul and Barnabas had clearly been called of God to work among Gentiles. They should be given the right hands of fellowship. But since their presence and teachings might irritate many Jewish brethren, and would certainly prejudice all unconverted Jews against Christianity, they must refrain from work in Palestine. The division was of territory rather than of race; for they preached to Jews as well to Gentiles outside the Holy Land. And it was of only transient duration; for while they never again, so far as we know, undertook evangelistic work in Palestine, Peter and John, on the other hand, spent their last years as missionaries in foreign lands. It is amusing to notice that while thus shutting out Paul and Barnabas from future work in Jerusalem, the apostles were anxious not to shut out any future gifts they might bring to the parent church. The wish was plainly stated, almost as a condition of future fellowship, that they continue to remember the poor (Gal. 2: 10). A collection plate is seldom willingly exclusive.

VI

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

CHRISTIANITY had been quietly spreading beyond the borders of Palestine until doubtless it had reached Rome itself; but that which we call Paul's first missionary journey, because his previous journeys are unrecorded, is our introduction to its activities in the Gentile world. From now on we shall be occupied mainly in watching its battles and campaigns in this larger domain. To the early Christians the Roman empire seemed to be the whole of the habitable world; the regions that lay beyond it were too vaguely known to awaken their interest. Its magnificence and power deeply impressed them; and that these should perish before the end of the earth itself was almost unthinkable. Thus its dominion and glory and everlastingness made it a fit symbol of the spiritual empire of Christ; and to win it for Him was the goal of their ambition. Even the most meager description of this world of Paul's day requires more space than can be here given it; let us consider simply certain features and facts that directly influenced the spread of Christianity.

1. The Roman World.

In many ways the Roman empire was much divided and heterogeneous. There was the great division into East and West, arising from character and history, and made evident later by the splitting of the empire. We speak of the Graeco-Roman world; really it was Ori-

ental, Greek and Roman, even as the inscription on the cross was in Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Then there was the subdivision into many provinces, distinct in forms of local government, dialects, customs and religions. Rome purposely left the individuality of these provinces unchanged, and—save for her common rule over all—they were as distinct as the different states of Europe to-day. This made mission work difficult; a journey of a few hours might be for the worker a change as great as passing from France into Spain. Yet there were strong unifying elements. The emperor was the universal head, the senate being increasingly a mere puppet; and Roman law and privileges were at the service of Roman citizens everywhere. Greek was spoken by all educated persons save in the extreme West where Latin took its place; and by this first century it had been simplified and suited to commercial and social life, though still retaining its marvellous flexibility and power to express delicate shades of thought. The missionary who spoke Greek could preach in any city; but he was dumb in the illiterate country regions unless he knew the local dialect. This is one reason why Christianity kept to the cities so long that the word countryman (paganus) came to mean a heathen. Magnificent highways starting from Rome stretched to the farthest borders; and travel on them was easy, incessant and comparatively safe. Though they were built for military purposes, they formed the great channels along which the gospel flowed; indeed, the smaller roads to the right or the left were almost impassable,—another reason why country regions did not at first receive the gospel. Except in the winter season there was, also, a well organized sea service for travellers all around the Mediterranean.

Society was divided into three classes:—the nobles,—wealthy, powerful and usually corrupt; the common people,—ignorant but generally virtuous and contented; and the slaves,—most numerous, wretched and a source of corruption and danger. In the provinces, however, life was far more sane and conditions more wholesome than in the city of Rome and its immediate vicinity. Everywhere books were plenty, easily multiplied by trained copyists, and therefore cheap; yet the period was one of intellectual decline. The Roman policy failed in popular education; schools were supported only by fees or endowments, and the state provided little for the masses except amusements, which often were brutalizing. The work of our modern charities was done by associations for mutual benefit, the commonest of which were burial societies; Christianity sometimes sheltered itself under these, since the government in its fear of independent organizations forbade all others.

Though Rome allowed the races and regions to follow their own religions, it knew nothing of our modern idea of religious freedom. It maintained supervision and control of all worship, save when the frenzied votaries of some Oriental goddess defied all restraints; and to a degree it assimilated the foreign deities. The old religions were still active, strong in priests and rich in temples; but they had largely lost their hold on the educated people, who had now advanced to a point where they regarded the stories about the gods as intellectually absurd and ethically revolting. Loss of faith had its usual effect of increasing superstition and strange cults; yet that the world was hungering for a higher and a universal religion was shown by its interest in Judaism, and by the spread of the mystery religions. It longed for a clearer revelation of one su-

preme God, for relief from the despair of conscious sin and failure, for a purer morality based on divine commands, and for assurance of immortality with appropriate rewards and punishments. Judaism offered these, and gained many proselytes; but Judaism was in spirit exclusive and in outward forms repelling. The mystery religions were more liberal and attractive. Those of Eleusis, Isis, Mithra and Cybele-Attis were the most popular, and were the strongest rivals of Christianity. Their ceremony of initiation included some form of baptism with water or blood by which the impurities of the past life were washed away; and the oaths taken by the initiate were promises to live a purer, higher life. By such initiation he was made a partner of the god, and in this partnership was his assurance of immortality. But the mystery religions were popular in proportion as they appealed to the senses and the passions. The worshippers indulged in frenzied worship of their god, and sought by dances or drink or emotional excitement to produce a consciousness of his or her presence. In many respects these religions were pernicious, and were often under the ban. Educated men turned to philosophy, finding there—especially in the teachings of Plato and the Stoics—a foundation for belief in one supreme God and the probability of life beyond the grave. But philosophy was cold, uninspiring and uncertain; it served for the study but not for the home and the shops. Christianity came into the midst of these seekers after God and light on the life beyond. "The appeal of philosophy to the intellect, the charm of the mystery religions for the senses, the ethical demands of Judaism upon the will, were all found in the highest and purest form combined in the Christian religion." And wherever it was offered, sin-

burdened men and women eagerly stretched out their hands for it.

Nevertheless, there were many hindrances to the spread of the new religion. Emperor worship was enjoined upon all except the Jews; and because it was patriotic as well as religious, refusal by Gentile Christians and later on by any Christian to join in it was treasonable. All social engagements and all business transactions were accompanied with religious rites in which a Christian could not join; this shut him out from the life of his neighbours, and caused the frequent charge that Christians were "morose" and "haters of mankind." The heathen religions were turned into a means of money-making; men would attempt to do the same with Christianity, as did Simon Magus, or would bitterly assail those who interfered with their heathen profits,—as Paul experienced in Philippi and Ephesus. These moneyed interests of pagan religions reached out in most unexpected directions:—Pliny notes that since his persecution of the Christians there has been a great increase in the demand for fodder for the cattle of the sacrifices! Religion was deemed a thing apart from morals; hence, as Paul's letters constantly reveal, a man might suppose that he could be a good Christian and still indulge in theft, adultery and the like. Also, men adopted new religions in addition to their old ones, and would be disposed to accept Christianity without giving up heathen ideas and practices. The Eastern cults which were pressing into the West were the most active and dangerous rivals of Christianity. On the one hand, they were ready to annex certain Christian features to their own motley teachings, and then offer the whole as a higher, esoteric form of Christianity; and on the other hand, the ban which the government

with good reason placed on these Oriental cults fell upon Christianity also, as soon as its distinctness from Judaism was seen. This distinctness became evident slowly; but after the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) it was unmistakable, and the Jews themselves were vindictive in calling attention to it. Henceforth, the privileges granted to Christianity as supposedly a Jewish sect were withdrawn; and Roman rulers in proportion to their laudable energy in enforcing the laws were active in persecuting the Christians.

2. The Call and the Tour Through Cyprus.

When Barnabas and Paul returned from their ministration in Jerusalem, they took with them John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas (12:25; Col. 4:10). This indicates that already they were planning a work in which he could assist them; and we may be sure it was the work among Gentiles, handed over to them by the apostles. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that soon after they reached Antioch and reported what had been done in Jerusalem, they started forth on a journey through the neighbouring Gentile lands. With this journey begins a new chapter in the history of Christianity,—that of deliberate, organized work in foreign missions. Whatever had been done hitherto, save in the instance of Cornelius, had originated in persecution, and been carried on unsystematically; but now the church, guided by the Holy Spirit appoints missionaries and sends them forth. Luke shows his feeling of the importance of this new step by the formal way in which he introduces his account of the journey. We need not suppose there was anything miraculous in the call of these two men to go forth as missionaries. Like all such calls it came when oppor-

tunity and ability combined to create duty; and it was voiced by the whisper of the Holy Spirit and by the Lord speaking through the church.

Antioch was the gateway by land or sea to the regions of the West; among its Christians were men of prominence like Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch; there was financial ability to support mission workers, as was shown by the contribution to famine relief. No wonder, then, that when the five prophets and teachers of the church were engaged in the regular services or in some special, solemn gathering for light upon their duty towards the Gentile lands, it was divinely borne in upon them that Barnabas and Paul should be released from all other occupations and sent forth as foreign missionaries. To send them was a sacrificial act, for Barnabas was the beloved head of the church and Paul was the ablest of them all; and it was a solemn act, for they knew the perils these two men might encounter. Naturally the whole church fasted and prayed before they laid hands upon them and sent them away, entrusting them to the grace of God (14:26). Whether the laying on of hands was ordination or benediction is one of those delightful questions over which discussion can go on, if good-natured, interminably. They went forth as missionaries of the Antiochian church:—we know this because, not only do they make a full report to that church upon their return (14:27), but in this journey, and only in this, Luke calls both of them apostles (14:4, 14), a title that could not be given to Barnabas unless he was the apostle, i.e., the missionary, of the church in Antioch (cf. II Cor. 8:23). Doubtless the expenses of the journey were borne by the church, and generously according to the spirit shown in the famine

gift. On his next journey Paul was not sent by the church, and had to labour for his bread or accept gifts from friends. Whether at this time he reckoned himself an apostle of the same rank as the Twelve is doubtful. Nothing indicates that he had been so reckoned by them in the discussion over Titus or at any later period. Indeed, they would find it hard to believe that their peculiar position and privileges could be shared by anyone who had not been formally appointed, as was Matthias, or that their number could be greater than that originally fixed by the Lord. And Paul himself, though later on he stoutly maintained his equality with Peter and the rest, probably came slowly to recognize it and claim it, as the greatness of the Gentile work and his unique position in it dawned upon him.

It was at the opening of navigation in the spring of 46 A.D.—if we may fix a date where dates are so uncertain—that Barnabas and Paul, taking with them John Mark as their assistant, went down to the seaport, Seleucia, and sailed to Cyprus. Barnabas was the leader, Cyprus was his native island, and it was a stronghold of the Jews; hence the decision to begin work there. Landing at Salamis and using the synagogues as their preaching-places, they made a systematic tour of the island clear to its capital and westernmost city, Paphos,—in all at least one hundred miles. Luke's silence as to results indicates that the preaching met with little response, not even arousing hostility. It would be done mainly by Barnabas as leader; and either he lacked experience in pioneer work, or his kindly nature drew back from controversy such as Paul was ever ready to engage in. Nevertheless, there was enough promise in the work to make Barnabas choose this field again some two years later.

At Paphos Paul came to the front. The proconsul residing there, Sergius Paulus, was a man of varied interests, who had already attached to his court a Jew, Bar-Jesus, calling himself Elymas, i.e., a magus, and like Simon Magus making his living by a mixture of real knowledge and arrant imposture; and when the two itinerant preachers reached his capital, he summoned them to tell him about the religion they were proclaiming. As the Roman ruler listened with evident approval to the words of Barnabas and Saul, the magus feared that he might be supplanted in favour by these new teachers, and began to interrupt and contradict, doubtless setting the Jewish ideas of the Messiah against the Christian. Paul best knew how to deal with such an opponent. Silencing him with a look, he denounced his craft and villainy in strongest terms, and with prophetic insight declared, "The hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." At once upon the eyes of the magus there fell a mist increasing to utter darkness; and as all bystanders shrank away in horror, he groped about seeking a hand to lead him. To maintain, as some do, that the blindness of Elymas was simply spiritual is to forget that spiritual blindness was too universal to be impressive, and, also, that a false prophet and worker of pretended miracles could best be exposed by true prophecy and a real miracle. There was mercy as well as judgment in Paul's sentence,—the blindness was to last only until the time when penitence and faith should remove it. Paul's own experience of blinded eyes made him merciful. The teaching and the miracle caused the proconsul to believe; but apparently it did not lead him to open confession of faith and baptism. That step would have

forced him to resign his office; for the duties of a Roman official included participation in heathen rites and sacrifices. The house of Rimmon is a very ancient and also very present hindrance to would-be Christians.

At this point in his narrative Luke without any explanation makes two important changes:—henceforth he uses the Roman name, Paul, instead of the Jewish Saul, and he speaks of Paul and Barnabas or, in one instance, "Paul and his company" instead of Barnabas and Saul. This is his quiet way of indicating that from this time on Paul was the leader, and the work was mainly among Gentiles where his Roman name would be used.

3. In Pisidian Antioch.

From Paphos the missionaries crossed to the mainland, arriving at Perga in Pamphylia. Here John Mark deserted them and returned to his home in Jerusalem, possibly because he did not like Paul as leader and the new emphasis on Gentile work, possibly because he feared the hardships that lay before them. For, instead of preaching in Pamphylia, as might be expected and as did take place later, Paul and Barnabas hurried northward over the Taurus mountains by wretched cross-country roads with "perils of rivers and perils of robbers" (II Cor. 11:26) fully a hundred miles until they reached Pisidian Antioch. A reason for this most unusual journey, so out of the ordinary routes of travel, has been much sought; that advanced by Professor Ramsay is most probable. He supposes that in the hot, marshy plains of Pamphylia Paul was stricken with malaria, and sought the highlands of Galatia for relief. Antioch was in Galatia,

and Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, "Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel to you the first time." Also, one feature of the disease is a blinding headache "like a red hot bar thrust through the forehead," and Paul reminds the Galatians that when he first came among them "If possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me" (Gal. 4:14 f.). If this was his disease, and if, as is likely, it recurred from time to time, we may believe that these blinding, disabling headaches were the "thorn in the flesh," which he prayed might depart, and through which he learned by experience that God's power is made perfect in weakness (II Cor. 12:7 f.).

The Antioch that Paul and Barnabas had now reached was one of several cities bearing the name, and was known as the Pisidian Antioch because, though in Phrygia, it lay close to the borders of Pisidia. These old national lines, however, had been disregarded by the Romans when they divided Asia Minor into provinces; and Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe—all on the highway from Ephesus to Antioch in Syria—were at this time included in the great Roman province of Galatia. Pisidian Antioch had been founded about 300 B.C. as a Greek city with the usual welcome to Jews; and about 6 B.C. Augustus had made it a Roman colony and settled veteran soldiers there. A Roman colony was considered to be a part of the city of Rome, enjoying the same constitution, citizenship and use of Latin in its official business as the imperial city. Its purpose was to aid in Roman control of the country and in Latinizing the people, and its privileges were highly prized. Such a city would be a good center for

missionary work because of its liberal thought and its influence upon the surrounding region.

The two apostles, while pausing for some days in Antioch for rest and recovery from illness, became known to their numerous Jewish neighbours; so, when they were able to attend the synagogue, they were invited to address the congregation,—an invitation which Paul, the more ready speaker, accepted. The fullness of the report of his speech, and the various marks of an eye-witness (e.g., that he stood instead of sitting as he spoke, beckoned with his hand to command attention, withdrew before the close of the service) form a good argument that Luke was in the audience,—possibly he had previously been called as a physician to attend Paul. In his address Paul followed much the same lines as Peter at Pentecost and Stephen before the Sanhedrin, but advanced to a broad offer of salvation and a statement of his favourite doctrine of justification by faith. The warning with which he closed may indicate that his words were not received wholly with favour; but as he went out from the synagogue after speaking, because still weak from recent illness, he was asked to speak again the next Sabbath; and when the service closed, many Jews and devout Gentiles followed the apostles to their lodgings where further explanation of the gospel was given them. Before the next Sabbath all the Antiochans were discussing the new teaching, and they thronged the synagogue for Paul's second address. Such eagerness of the Gentiles to learn about the salvation that is in Christ filled the Jews with jealousy and suspicion; and they interrupted the address with contradictions and jeers until Paul and Barnabas, after declaring that they had done their duty in offering the word of God to the Jews, said with

a touch of sarcasm, "Seeing ye thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

"This incident," says Dr. Hort, "is the true turning point at which a Gentile Christianity formally and definitely begins." Before this the gospel had been offered to those Gentiles only who had come so far toward Judaism as to worship in the synagogue; but now Paul offered it directly to those who stood without and with whom no Jew would associate. From this time on, as we shall see, his method of work in any city was to begin in the synagogue, if there was one, and continue there as long as the Jews would allow; then when its doors were closed against him, as usually happened soon, to preach in Gentile homes and public places until he was forced to depart. Here in Antioch the Gentiles received him as an angel of God (Gal. 4:14), and listened with gladness when he portrayed to them the crucified Saviour (Acts 13:48; Gal. 3:1). The gift of the Holy Ghost and the working of miracles in their midst set the seal of divine approval on their faith (Gal. 3:5). They recognized that they were specially blessed, and in gratitude to Paul would have taken upon themselves his physical suffering (Gal. 4:14 f.). Despite the hostility of the Jews, the work went on until the gospel message had been carried throughout the Phrygian region, of which Antioch was the administrative center. But the Jews had powerful allies in certain Gentile women, probably Romans, of high standing who worshipped with them and who now at their instigation persuaded the chief men of the city to expel the apostles. The expulsion would be after due trial for disturbing the peace, and with punishment by scourging. Paul states (II Cor.

11:25) that notwithstanding his Roman citizenship, he was thrice beaten with rods,—a form of punishment that the magistrates of this Roman colony would follow. Why he did not claim exemption we cannot tell.

4. In Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

Iconium was a less important but prosperous city of this same Phrygian district of Galatia, some eighty miles east of Antioch. Hither Paul and Barnabas made their way, and here they began work in the synagogue after the same manner as in Antioch. Many Jews as well as Gentiles became believers; but the unbelieving Jews were active in stirring up opposition until the whole city was divided into two parties over them. (Acts 14:3 seems to be a late and untrustworthy addition:—it comes in awkwardly; it states that the apostles worked a long time after the opposition arose, which is improbable; and its vague mention of signs and wonders is unlike Luke's definite description of miracles in this journey.) The magistrates of the city, though unwilling to take action when public sentiment was thus divided, would be glad to get rid of these troublesome strangers; so the hostile Jews and Gentiles dared to lead a mob assault upon the apostles, and forced them to flee across the border to Lystra, eighteen miles from Iconium and somewhat off the main road, in the Lycaonian district of Galatia. An early apocryphal book, The Acts of Paul and Thekla, tells the story of a young woman who was converted by Paul in Iconium. Its historical value is slight, but it illustrates the way in which Christianity incurred hatred through the inevitable rupture of family ties. Also, it gives the earliest and most trustworthy description of Paul's person as follows, "small in size, bald-

headed, bow-legged, strongly built, with eyebrows meeting, full of grace, sometimes seeming like a man and sometimes having the countenance of an angel."

At Lystra, lived Eunice, a devout Jewess married to a prominent Gentile, together with her son, Timothy, and her mother, Lois; in their home Paul and Barnabas may have found shelter, and through Paul's teaching they became Christians (16:1; I Cor. 4:17; II Tim. 1:5). There seem to have been few other Jews in Lystra; and, as there was no synagogue, the apostles preached in the market-place and elsewhere. One day while thus engaged, Paul noticed on the ground near him a lifelong cripple, listening with a faith that was evidently sufficient for an act of healing. The apostle fastened his eyes upon him, and speaking with a loud voice suddenly said, "Stand upright upon thy feet;" and the man sprang up, able to walk. The watching crowd at once concluded that these two strangers were gods in human guise, as in the familiar Phrygian story of Baucis and Philemon, and proclaimed this with shouts, identifying the dignified, stately Barnabas with Zeus and the little, lively, loquacious Paul with Hermes. The apostles did not understand the outcries because the uneducated population used only the native dialect; and it was not until later in the day, when the priest of the temple of Zeus outside the city brought oxen and garlands for a sacrifice to them at the gates—probably of the house where they were lodging,—that they realized the situation. Then, rending their clothes to express their horror and rushing in among the crowd with cries of remonstrance, they finally succeeded in stopping the sacrifice, and in the pause which followed explained their mission as messengers of the living God by whom all things were made. In the

natural reaction from their adoration, the Lystrans were ready later on to listen to the slanders of Jews who came from Antioch and Iconium; and, striving to surpass these larger cities in their treatment of Paul, they stoned him until they thought him dead, and then disposed of his body by dragging it outside the city. Did Stephen's death come back to Paul as the stones were hurled? He proved to be only stunned; and while his mourning friends stood around him, he rose to his feet and was able to return to his lodgings and the next day to leave the city,—a recovery so rapid and complete as to seem a miracle. Derbe, the next preaching-place, thirty miles on, was small and free from enemies; and the apostles made many converts here,—so many that Luke says they evangelized the city,—perhaps "Gaius of Derbe" (20:4) was one.

5. The Return to Antioch in Syria.

More than a year had gone since the two apostles set out on their journey; the church at home was waiting their return; and the great highway east from Derbe was the direct route homeward. But instead of going forward they retraced their steps, and at the risk of meeting former foes and fresh persecution visited again Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. The impelling force was a desire to see and further help the disciples in those cities, and the visit is one of many manifestations of Paul's devotion to his churches and friends. There was no public preaching,—it was too dangerous; but there were private reunions with brethren who joyed to see them yet trembled at their hazard; there were words of cheer and consolation in the tribulations that abounded; and there was aid, such as only a parent missionary can give, in organizing the

churches. Just how full and formal an organization should be read into the statement they "appointed for them elders in every church" (14:23), must wait discussion. After this, leaving Antioch and going south through Pisidia, they crossed once more the Taurus range and came down into Pamphylia. In Perga they gave the gospel message which Paul's illness had prevented them from giving the year before; and then, as apparently there was little response and as the navigation season of 47 A.D. was about to close, they sought the seaport, Attalia, and sailed to Antioch where in the presence of the assembled church they told the thrilling story of what they had wrought with God's help, and especially of how the Gentiles were thronging into the fold through the open door, not of circumcision but of faith. The scene is memorable as the first great welcome to returning missionaries. And we notice that there was no questioning or murmuring over the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles. Whatever the church at Jerusalem might hold, these Christians of Antioch believed that the Gentiles should be given the gospel.

This first missionary journey had occupied at least a year and a half, and had covered some fourteen hundred miles by land and water. It had revealed "that the gospel could find a ready hearing in the commercial towns of the West, and that the Greek world contained thousands of persons ready and eager for what Christianity had to offer" (Ropes),—a fact deeply affecting the whole question of the relation of Christianity to Judaism. It had brought Paul to the front as a strong leader, peculiarly fitted for Gentile work. And doubtless in it had been developed the plan of work that he always followed later, namely, to strike for the

great centres, to begin in the synagogue, if there was one, leaving it only when forced to leave, to adapt his words and life to the people among whom he laboured, to establish churches before he passed on, and to watch over them afterwards as a father over his children.

VII

THE BATTLE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

WE come now to a section of apostolic history, recorded in Acts XV and Gal. II, concerning which there has been an endless amount of discussion. When and to whom was Galatians written? Is the Jerusalem visit of Gal. 2:1-10 recorded anywhere in Acts? When did Peter visit Antioch? What stirred up the trouble there? Exactly what was settled by the decree of Acts 15:23 f.? Pages might be given to discussing these problems without settling them; it seems better, therefore, to present with little discussion the conclusions that are most satisfactory to the present writer, believing that the presentation itself will be their best defence. This has already been done in part when the visit of Gal. 2:1-10 was identified with the famine visit of Acts.

1. The Christians and the Law.

By the Law is meant, of course, that great body of legislation concerning morals, forms and times of worship, foods, purifications, etc., written out in the Old Testament, and the still greater mass of further legislation, created by the desire to secure perfect obedience to the written code, and handed down orally until after the Apostolic Age. In our thought of the Law we are inclined to distinguish between that part which relates to ethics,—the moral law,—and that part which relates to special Jewish observances,—the ceremonial

law. No such distinction existed in the thought of the Jews:—to steal and to eat the flesh of swine, to blaspheme and to pick up sticks on the Sabbath, were all and equally transgressions of the Law. All was binding upon the Chosen People, who in solace for their loss of political liberty kept increasing the strictness of their religious bondage. We may marvel that they gloried in the Law; but it was their special heritage, it made them a distinct people, it created a sense of secure possession of God's favour, and it harmonized with a natural tendency in the human heart to lay down exact rules and ordinances and to count the observance of them highest merit. The man who has been reared in legalism finds it hard indeed to recognize that an act gains value only from its motive, and that to be must ever precede to do.

So long as Christianity remained in its Jewish cradle, all believers agreed that the Law was binding upon them; they thought of themselves as a Jewish sect, more liberal than the Pharisees but equally loyal to the national religion. Afterwards, by various steps which we have traced,—Stephen, Samaria, Cornelius, Paul, Antioch, Titus,—the decision was reached that the Gentiles might accept Christ without undergoing circumcision and placing themselves under the Law; but many in the parent church refused to accept this decision, even with the agreement that the leaders in the Gentile work should keep at a distance so as not to offend the Jews. From this time on there were in the church three distinct views and various intermediate shades of opinion concerning the obligations of the Law.

At one extreme stood the party of the circumcision, made up largely of Pharisees (15:5), who held that

the Law is binding upon all Christians, and that only in connection with keeping it can salvation be gained. Jesus, they argued, was the promised Jewish Messiah; and those who have a place in His kingdom must be Jews either by birth or by adoption, and must obey the laws and ordinances God of old laid down for His people. They pointed to the example of Jesus Himself in keeping the Law, to the danger of gross license without it, and to the many prophecies of a final, world-wide Jewish Kingdom. They had to admit that occasionally a man might be accepted of God apart from the Law; there were instances of this recorded in the Scriptures; but such salvation is merely as crumbs from the children's table.

At the other extreme was the party of Paul, who held that salvation comes solely through union with Christ, and that the life of His followers is one of perfect liberty. The Jewish Law was for Jews alone, preparing the way for Christ, and is of no value now that He has come. And even the law of conscience under which the Gentiles lived, has ceased to be binding upon those who are in Christ. For the Christian life is not one of obedience to a set of rules, but a joyful reproduction of the life of Christ, in which the things that are pure and just and holy are to be done not of compulsion but of free choice, not to gain righteousness but because through Him righteousness has already been gained. Jesus is the universal Saviour since faith in Him is open to all; and whosoever believes on Him is no longer a Jew or a Gentile but a new creature.

A third party held that the Law is binding upon Jewish Christians only. They are not freed from it by accepting Jesus as Messiah; but the Gentiles need

not assume its obligations when they become believers. This apparently was the view of James, and tacitly adopted by the leaders of the church in the conference over Titus. It seemed a harmonizing compromise which ought to suit everybody; as a matter of fact it suited neither of the parties and, like most compromises, gave rise to further troubles. Still, Paul did not oppose it, because it gave him a free hand in the Gentile work; and "they that were of circumcision" (11:2) acquiesced in it, so long as they thought the Gentile work would amount to little and would be kept far away. Certainly it was an illogical position:—either Christianity is a new religion whose followers are free from any Jewish obligations; or else it is only one form of Judaism, in which case the Law in some form is binding upon all its adherents. Later on, as we shall see, the latter alternative prevailed, and the Law in a spiritualized form was generally felt to be binding; but this solution of the problem was not at present in the mind of any.

2. Peter at Antioch.

The missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas as we have seen, bore two unexpected fruits both important:—one was the rise of Paul to leadership, and the other was the discovery that a multitude of Gentile men and women were longing for the message of the gospel and willing to accept it even at the price of breaking with friends or family and undergoing persecution. Evidently Paul henceforth must be reckoned with in all apostolic plans, and the Gentile church was going to be far larger than any had dreamed. Whether the church in Jerusalem awoke to these two facts, and therefore sent Peter to Antioch in the spring of 48 A.D.

to investigate the Gentile work, or whether he came of his own initiative to see how his brethren fared, we will not attempt to decide. The former view commends itself to those who hold that the apostles were truly bishops; the latter to those who regard them as solely the first great foreign missionaries. Whatever his purpose in visiting the church of Antioch, Peter was pleased with what he found there; and we are told that he ate with the Gentile Christians just as the other Jewish Christians were doing. This need not mean that these Jewish Christians were eating food forbidden by the Law; there was no necessity for their doing so, and very little temptation, since food that from childhood they had considered unclean would still be revolting if no longer forbidden. Nor does it probably mean that Jews and Gentiles were sharing their ordinary meals; the home life of each race would go on after conversion as before, and there would be little occasion for admitting each other to it. The one place where all the members of the church would come together was the room, probably in the house of some wealthy member, where they met for worship; and the one meal that all would share came in connection with the Eucharistic service. For this they met in the evening because most of them, being labouring men or slaves, were not free to meet in working hours; and the meal, eaten before the sacrament, was simply a substitute for a supper at home; though when the sacrament in later days was separated from the meal, the latter was still continued as an expression of Christian brotherhood, a "love feast" (Jude 12). For the supper each brought his own food, and shared it with others or not as he chose (I Cor. 11:21); so even at

this table a Jewish Christian need not eat Gentile food, though he would be eating with Gentiles.

The coming of Peter to Antioch and his cordial participation in the life of the brethren must, like the coming of Barnabas, have been an inspiration and blessing to the church. But harmony was presently changed to discord by further visitors from Jerusalem, belonging to the party that had stirred up trouble over Titus, and flaming with the same zeal for the Law. Paul says they came from James (Gal. 2:12), and Luke tells us they taught, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). James, who was himself a strict observer of the Law, may have sent them because he had heard of laxity among the Jewish Christians in Antioch; but as he had already agreed that Titus need not be circumcised, he could not have authorized their statement of the terms of salvation,—indeed, later on he expressly states the contrary (15:24). Possibly Luke's most brief summary of what they taught is incomplete; certainly it must be interpreted in the light of what followed. The first triumph of these new teachers was that Peter, followed by the other Jews and even Barnabas, gradually "drew back and separated himself" from eating with the Gentile brethren, doing so through fear of "them that were of the circumcision," i.e., the party these men from James represented (Gal. 2:12-13). That Peter should act thus is not surprising,—he was ever sensitive to criticism, and he may have been guarding his future usefulness among Jews; but that Barnabas after working so long for the Gentiles should refuse to share their communion meal, shows that the pressure must have been strong indeed.

What was it that these men from James urged with

such force? If they were insisting that no person is a Christian until circumcised, Peter and Barnabas certainly could not agree with them. Gentile believers, though they had not become Jews, had ceased to be heathen,—they confessed Christ, loved Him, served Him, and through their loyalty were the first to bear His name; to deem them not His followers was impossible. And if they were His followers, then in Him, as Peter himself had proclaimed (4:12), they had salvation; and as to keeping the Law, the leaders of the church at Jerusalem had declared they need not keep it. Granting all this, the question still remained, Are they so free from Gentile impurities that a Jew would not be contaminated if he ate with them? Here was a possible stumbling-block which had been ignored until these mischief-makers from Judea pushed it to the front. To understand the difficulty we must bear in mind that the Jewish idea of impurity was the same as that which goes with all systems of tabu,—in the forbidden article or act is a mysterious force, an impurity, which communicates itself to the person who breaks the tabu, and not only renders him impure but makes him in turn a possible source of impurity to others (Num. 19:22; Hag. 2:13; I Cor. 10:20). A Gentile was thought to be in a constant state of impurity from food and acts upon which the Law had placed a tabu; therefore, any contact with him would make a Jew impure. To avoid all contact, especially in Gentile lands, was evidently impossible; so it was held that impurity was conveyed only by intimate forms of contact, among which eating together was specially polluting:—the Old Testament Apocrypha and the charges against Jesus (Mk. 2:16) and Peter (Acts 11:3) reveal this.

The church at Antioch had taken for granted that when a Gentile became a Christian his impurity was removed, and therefore no reason remained why Jewish Christians might not eat with him. The men from James were shocked to find them doing this, and said in protest, "No: a Gentile is not so cleansed from pollution that we Jews can eat with him until he is circumcised!" There must have been much dispute over the matter, for Peter and the others were slow to accept this opinion; but accept it they did, and began to hold their love-feast and sacramental service apart from the Gentile believers. Henceforth—so the prospect was—there would be in the church two distinct bodies who could not commune together. Modern defenders of denominational exclusiveness at home and of refusal to co-operate on mission fields, may not deplore such a division in the church; but Paul was mightily aroused against it. He seems to have been absent when the discussion began, or he would have taken part in it at once; and he did not return until the split had come, and the Jewish Christians with Peter as their leader were eating the communion meal in a separate corner of the church room. At once before them all he rebuked the great apostle to his face (Gal. 2:14, 11); this was not a matter for delay or suppressed complaint or private conference; Peter was in the wrong and must be withstood. Paul's account of what he said to Peter (Gal. 2:14 f.) ends we know not just where, because he passes without a break to a full discussion of justification by faith; nor does he give all that he said, since his main purpose in relating the incident is to show the Galatians his full and independent apostleship. Undoubtedly he began by insisting that in no way must the body of Christ be

divided:—this is a theme he dwells on in his epistles, and an end he ever kept before him in his later labours. And then he went on to say, in substance, "You, Peter, are forcing such a division by treating these men as sinners of the Gentiles. You are doubly inconsistent:—you refuse to eat with them because they do not keep the Law; yet you are convinced that it is not necessary for anyone to keep the Law; for you agree with me that a man is accepted of God, not because he keeps the Law, which truly no man can keep, but because of faith in Christ. Faith makes these men pure; why then disobey the command you received at Joppa,—'What God hath cleansed, make not thou common'? We who are in Christ have died to the Law that we may live unto God through Him whose life is our life; how dare we hold ourselves apart from these Gentiles whose equal share in that divine life makes them one with us?" Paul's remonstrance and argument prevailed with Peter. This is not stated in the letter to the Galatians, simply because it is self-evident,—the incident otherwise would have no value in proving his authority as an apostle; and we know that when the matter came up in Jerusalem, Peter not only gave his hearty support to Paul's position, but even used Paul's arguments in defending it.

3. The Council at Jerusalem.

Though Peter and Barnabas resumed their former brotherly relations with Gentile Christians, the trouble stirred up by the men from James did not disappear but rather spread to the other churches in the province of Syria-Cilicia, all of whom looked to Antioch as the metropolitan church. Undoubtedly the assertion was constantly and confidently made that the church in

Jerusalem would not sanction the communion of Jews with Gentiles; and certainly the dispute could not be settled until the church that was the acknowledged mother and guide of all, should pass upon it. With good reason, therefore, Paul and Barnabas and certain others were appointed to take the question to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. On their way thither they were heard with great joy by the brethren in Phoenicia and Samaria as they told of the conversion of the Gentiles; but when they reached Judea the agreement made at their former visit (Gal. 2:9) kept them silent until they were in the sacred city. Here they were kindly received, and at a meeting of the church "rehearsed all things that God had done with them" (15:4),—their whole ministry for the Gentiles, including the formation of churches in which these worshipped with their Jewish brethren. Thereupon, certain Pharisees who had accepted Christ without abandoning their old idea of separateness, declared that to circumcise the Gentiles and charge them to keep the Law was "needful" (15:5). Needful for what? Not for their reception into the church,—the discussion over Cornelius and Titus had settled that—but for any communion of Jews with them. It was the same old attempt to impose the burden of the Law as necessary, not this time for salvation but for Christian unity.

A special meeting was called to discuss and settle this matter; and in it Peter was the prominent spokesman, claiming this position because he first had been called of God to preach the gospel to Gentiles. The difference between his present argument and that with which he defended himself for eating with the little group in Caesarea (11:5 f.) shows how far he had

advanced in Christian truths since that earlier day. He said, "The gift of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and the others proves that in the sight of God they are as clean as Jewish Christians. He has made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith even as He cleansed ours. To insist that they are not pure unless they bear the burden of the Law, is to question the work of God, and require them to do the impossible. We ourselves are conscious that we fail in keeping the Law, and we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, exactly as they are. If we pronounce them unclean, what are we?" Silence followed; the Pharisees had no answer ready. Then Paul and Barnabas spoke, making no argument or appeal but simply adding weight to Peter's words by telling of repeated instances in their own labours where God had shown by miracles His acceptance of the Gentiles. Finally, James, the brother of Jesus and the recognized head of the church, whom the emissaries at Antioch had professed to represent, gave his own judgment based on what he had heard and on what the prophets had foretold. It was unanimously accepted, and put into a letter which was sent to the troubled Gentile churches. "The Gentiles," so James declared, "are our brother Christians, and should be treated as such. The mischievous, soul-ravaging words of the unauthorized representatives should be denounced, and Barnabas and Paul should be given heartiest endorsement as men who have hazarded their lives for the sake of Christ. Nevertheless, these Gentile believers ought to shape their lives in such a way as not to block the spread of Christianity among the unbelieving Jews who are their neighbours. In every city there are synagogues filled with Jews

most scrupulous in keeping the Law; if once there spreads abroad the idea that Christians are impure, no synagogue will admit us, and no Jew will listen to us. Let Gentile Christians, therefore, do at least as much as Gentiles would have to do if they sought permission to worship in the synagogue, or as Moses decreed that they must do if they would make their home in the land of the Jews;—let them abstain from food that has been offered as a sacrifice to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from fornication; if they keep themselves from these, their state will be satisfactory."

Evidently these four restrictions were of things specially revolting to Jews; and it is easy to see why. A pious Jew shrank from contact with the Gentile world because it seemed to him everywhere foul with pollutions of idols, disgusting foods and licentiousness: care must be taken, therefore, to convince him that Gentile Christians no longer gave themselves over to these things. Food offered to idols whether eaten in a temple or at home, was held to be a communion with demons (Deut. 32:17; I Cor. 10:20); blood was the life element and therefore sacred to God (Deut. 12:23); things strangled and not bled still retained the blood and should not be eaten; all this is obvious. But the fourth restriction comes with a shock of surprise because we had not imagined that any Christian,—Jew or Gentile,—would consider fornication allowable. For this reason many understand fornication here to mean incestuous marriages, such as the one that Paul calls by this name and sharply condemns (I Cor. 5:1); and they point out that this interpretation makes all four restrictions correspond to those laid down for the stranger sojourning among the

Israelites (Lev. 17:1-18:30). Others would retain the usual meaning of the word, because sins of unchastity were lightly regarded in the Gentile world, many temples were religious brothels, and Paul had constantly to warn his converts against sexual impurity. Possibly there is no need to choose between the two meanings of the word, since both may have been in the mind of the Jerusalem church.

Barnabas and Paul were given the letter; and two leading men in the church, Judas Barsabbas and Silas, were selected to return with them and carry fraternal greetings. Thus the church at Jerusalem expressed most strongly its willingness to treat the Gentile Christians as brethren. And the believers at Antioch, on the other hand, gladly accepted the restrictions urged upon them; when the epistle was read, "they rejoiced for the exhortation," i.e., the implied God-speed for their work; and when Judas and Silas had fulfilled their mission, they dismissed them in peace. Such was the satisfactory ending of a dispute which threatened either to impose upon the Gentiles the burden of the Law or to split the church. The settlement reached is sometimes represented as involving a partial subjection of the Gentiles to the Law; but if Paul had regarded it as such, he would have fought against it as bitterly as against compelling Titus to be circumcised. The battle for liberty had been won, and he would not allow any of its fruits to be stolen in this way. But to comply with these four restrictions, if compliance would promote access to Jewish unbelievers or bind the Jewish Christians more closely to their Gentile brethren, was exactly in agreement with two leading principles of Paul's life,—"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," and "Give no

occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (I Cor. 6:12; 10:32). And though he accepted the restrictions, he did not feel himself under compulsion to observe them when observance would not further the purpose for which they were given. We shall see this illustrated repeatedly later on. Evidently he did not look upon the letter from Jerusalem as a decree, which must be implicitly obeyed, but rather as "a strong expression of opinion, more than advice and less than a command" (Hort) which left him at liberty to use ultimately his own judgment. Note finally that while the Gentiles were thus cordially recognized as Christians and brethren, there still was room for the opinion that they would be better Christians if they kept the Law. Though the question of liberty and of fraternity had been settled, the question of equality was yet to be discussed, and the discussion when it did arise was a heated one.

This was not the only time when Paul laboured hard to hold the church together as one body of Christ; we shall find him ever striving to prevent a rupture. There was grave danger that the Gentile brethren, constantly treated with suspicion or contempt by the Jewish, might break away entirely and refuse to recognize any connection with Jerusalem. Had they done so, the result would have been disastrous. There would have been increasing hostility to anything that bore marks of Jewish origin; the Old Testament would have ceased to be held sacred; Jewish ethics would have been cast aside: the teachings of the Twelve would have lost authority; and even the figure of Jesus might have been changed into something nearer the Greek ideals. And could the Gentile church, thus severing itself from the historic past and becoming an inde-

pendent organization, have survived amid the perils and pressure of the many and seductive forms of Greek religious thought in that and the next century? Would it not have sought more and more from Greek sources the material for an independent religion, and succumbed more and more to the moral miasma and spiritual delirium in which it had to live? Certainly Paul was "a wise master-builder" when he insisted that the whole church should be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. 2:20).

VIII

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

THE second missionary journey had as its immediate incentive Paul's desire to see again the converts of the first journey (15:36). If the time now was, as we suppose, the spring of 49 A.D., a year and a half had passed since he parted from them; and, though tidings of their welfare would be brought to Antioch repeatedly, he would long to know more exactly just how they were progressing in Christian faith and life. Behind this desire may have been, also, a longing to preach the gospel in the great Greek cities further west still unevangelized. Barnabas was invited to go with him and was ready to do so when a sharp dispute over taking Mark again as their assistant ended in separation and a division of the territory. Barnabas sailed with Mark to Cyprus, and Paul took the overland route to Galatia (15:37 f.). Naturally we sympathize with Barnabas in his insistence that Mark, despite his failing them once, be given a second trial, especially as we know that by so doing he saved Mark for the church, even as he had once saved Paul; but the brethren at Antioch seem to have sympathized with Paul, for unlike Barnabas he had their benediction when he went forth (15:40). We hear no more of Barnabas in Acts; tradition says that his later field was Egypt. From Paul's letters we infer that friendly relations were later on renewed, and that, if he never again worked

with Paul, he was known in Corinth and Colosse, two of Paul's churches (I Cor. 9:6; Col. 4:10). Indeed, we may well suppose that Luke is recording Paul's high estimate of Barnabas when he describes him as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). As for Mark, we find that in later years he became one of Paul's most useful and trusted assistants (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24; II Tim. 4:11), thereby proving that the faith of Barnabas in him despite his hour of failure was well founded, and that Paul's condemnation was too severe. To journey with himself now Paul selected Silas, whose ability and sympathy with the Gentiles, together with the fact that he was a Roman citizen, were strong recommendations. Whether he still was tarrying in Antioch or had to be summoned to Jerusalem, is an unimportant question arising from differing texts of Acts 15:33-34.

1. From Antioch to Troas.

The great western highway led first through those regions of Syria and Cilicia where Paul had preached in earlier days. Doubtless the Jerusalem letter had already been received by the brethren here, since it was addressed to them as well as to Antioch (15:23); and Paul needed simply to express his approval of its contents. But when he reached Galatia, he delivered the decrees to each church and urged the keeping of them. They were gladly accepted; and the effect of Paul's visit and of the knowledge that the Jerusalem church welcomed Gentiles as brethren is shown in the statement that "so the churches were strengthened in faith and increased in numbers daily" (16:5).

Paul still lacked a "fellow-worker" (Rom. 16:21) in place of Barnabas, as Luke indicates by using the

singular person in 15:41-16:3; but at Lystra the vacant place was filled by Timothy, a young man of high reputation and special promise, Paul's convert on the previous journey (16:1 f.; I Tim. 1:2). The emphatic "Behold," with which Luke introduces Timothy, and the reference in I Tim. 1:18 to "the prophecies that led the way" to him, indicate some remarkable spiritual guidance in the selection of the man who was to fill such an important position and be so much to Paul henceforth. And he was set apart for the work, as Paul and Barnabas had been at Antioch, by the laying on of hands by the Lystran elders and Paul himself (I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6). Though as a child Timothy had been thoroughly instructed in the Old Testament by his mother and grandmother, who were then devout Jewesses (II Tim. 3:15; 1:5), he had not been circumcised, since his father, probably now dead, was a Gentile; therefore, Paul himself circumcised him. This act can be defended by pointing out that it was done, not because Jewish Christians demanded it, as they did in the case of Titus, but because it would facilitate work among unbelieving Jews who might refuse to receive an uncircumcised man in their homes; yet, as Ramsay says, no act in Paul's life is more difficult to sympathize with, and none cost him more dear; for it was misunderstood by the Galatian converts, and used against him later by zealous advocates of the Law.

The older commentators, who understood by Galatia the region originally bearing that name and constituting in Paul's day the northern part of the great Roman province of Galatia, supposed that at this point (16:6) Paul and his companions journeyed into North Galatia, and preached in such cities as Ancyrus

and Pessina; but scholars now largely agree that the statement "they went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia," means simply a continuation of their journey westward through the Phrygian region of the Roman province. When they had visited the brethren in Pisidian Antioch, the question was, Whither next? Should they retrace their steps, or cross the Taurus and revisit Pamphylia, or go forward into unexplored fields? As yet they had done no new mission work; they were on the direct road to Ephesus, capital of the province of Asia and dominant city of all Asia Minor; a desire to preach Christ in the very face of the great goddess Artemis fired Paul's heart; so they pushed on. Possibly we should state the matter more strongly, and say that Paul had Ephesus in mind when he set out from Syrian Antioch, or at least when he selected Timothy to be henceforth his fellow-worker. He was a leader with bold plans and high courage. His success in Galatia could not but rouse in a mind like his a vision of the whole Roman empire claimed for Christ. He would go forward planting the cross in province after province clear across to Spain. Ephesus, "that great metropolis in which the East looked out upon the West," was the next step in such a march of conquest; when he had fully preached the gospel there, he could cross the Aegean. If this was his plan, he was now to learn,—as many a missionary must,—that an overruling Power defeats our best laid counsels. The record of the next section of this missionary journey (16:6-9) Ramsay pronounces "the most remarkable paragraph in Acts" because of the repeated operation of divine agencies, and the sweep and rush of the narrative in which point after point and province after province are hurried over. When

the travellers reached the province of Asia they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in it; then journeying northward they tried to enter the province of Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to do so; and passing through Mysia they came to Troas, still unable to preach because still in Asia, and doubtless much disappointed and sore perplexed. It is idle to conjecture what experiences lie behind this condensed statement of repeatedly changed plans, baffled undertakings and enforced silence; whatever they were, Paul accepted them as God's leadings; and when at Troas he saw in a night vision a Macedonian man, and heard his appeal, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," he recognized that the path along which he had been divinely driven was to the lands across the Aegean Sea.

2. Through the Cities of Macedonia.

At Troas Luke joined Paul's party,—so the change in the narrative from the third person to the first indicates; and doubtless he, a Greek and therefore familiar with the sea as the Jews were not, took charge of the arrangements for crossing the Aegean, and decided that they should sail for Philippi, which seems to have been his own city, rather than for some other place in Macedonia.

Crossing from Troas to Neapolis seems to us passing from one continent to another, and therefore a specially significant act; but no such thought could be in the mind of Paul as he embarked; since all the Greek cities around the Aegean were closely related in civil and political life. Luke always notes the details of a voyage:—this time they made a very quick run,—two days; a later crossing took five days (20:6). Philippi,

a few miles inland from Neapolis, was a Roman colony, like Pisidian Antioch, governed by two chief magistrates, praetors, as Rome was by two consuls and proud of its privileges and loyalty,—a pride evidently shared by Luke. There were not enough Jews here to support a synagogue, but a handful of women had a "place of prayer" by the riverside; and on a Sabbath the missionaries found them there, and sat down and talked with them. One of the number was Lydia, a devout Gentile from Thyatira, who carried on a prosperous traffic in the famous purple fabrics of her city. She listened with interest to the words of Paul, and in the days that followed became a convert, and with all her household was baptized; whereupon she invited Paul and his companions to make her house their home, insisting upon this so strongly, putting it as a favor to herself and not to them, that they yielded, despite Paul's rigid rule to shun even the semblance of making a living out of the gospel (I Cor. 9:14 f.).

The work in Philippi was beginning to bear fruit when, though free from the usual opposition of hostile Jews, it was brought to an end by a Gentile attack. Certain men of the city were joint-owners of a demoniac slave-girl whose skill as a ventriloquist and fortune-teller was making them wealthy. The psychology of demoniacal possession is too abstruse a subject to be discussed here in a paragraph, and is better taken up in a study of the life of Christ where it is repeatedly forced upon our attention. Certainly, to say that a demoniac is merely insane is as superficial a statement as to say that a paralytic is merely ill. The disordered intellect of the demoniac is evident; the real problem is whether the cause is physical or spiritual. Only those who have seen and carefully studied cases of demo-

niacal possession in lands where they still abound, are competent to pass judgment as to the cause: the rest of us merely darken counsel by words without knowledge. Demoniacs in Philippi were not so unusual as to attract the attention of the missionaries; but this girl kept following them and shouting their mission, as they went each day to the place of prayer which had now become a meeting-place for the believers. Paul endured such troublesome attentions for many days, but at last put an end to them by casting out the demon, thus stopping her masters' money-making; and they took revenge by dragging Paul and Silas before the praetors on the trumped up but plausible charge that these men were turning Roman citizens into Jews, and in this way spreading treason. If, just about this time Claudius was having trouble with the Jews at Rome, the charge that Jewish emissaries were at work in this proudly loyal colony would be doubly effective; and the declaration of the apostles that they were Roman citizens would be answered with howls of derision. Without any trial the excited petty praetors ordered them stripped, severely scourged (II Cor. 11:25) and kept in safest custody; and nightfall found them in an inner prison, their feet gripped by stocks, their backs raw with stripes, but their lips vocal with prayers and hymns to which the other prisoners listened with wonder. A severe earthquake, not uncommon in that region, came at midnight to set them free. In all its effects,—doors wrenched open, bonds loosed, prisoners bewildered or panic-stricken, the jailor ready to commit suicide if his charges had escaped,—there was nothing marvellous; the really impressive features of the scene were Paul's calmness and his prompt assumption of command over prisoners and jailor alike.

We shall see this repeated when he is shipwrecked; in all hours of stress and danger he is master of the situation, and dominates his companions, high or low, Christian or heathen.

Morning found the two prisoners now honored guests in the home of the jailor, who with all his household had believed on the Lord Jesus and been baptized. It found also the praetors far from satisfied with what they had done. We can hardly suppose that they associated the earthquake with the imprisonment of two vagabond Jews; but the night was not one for sleep, and as they reviewed the hasty action of the previous day, they were not so sure of its wisdom. Also, Luke and other friends of Paul may have been to them with vigorous protest. The easiest way to avoid unpleasant consequences was to set the prisoners free on condition that they leave the city at once; but after the open, shameful treatment he had received (I Thess. 2:2) Paul refused to be thus secretly and ignominiously released. To vindicate himself and protect the cause he represented, he insisted that rulers who had maltreated Roman citizens must make their amends as public as their injustice by coming in person to escort him and Silas from the prison. The abject praetors hastened to do this, and begged them to depart lest fresh disturbance should arise. So, after staying in the house of Lydia until they were fit for travel, they bade farewell to the assembled brethren, and left Philippi. Timothy went with them, but Luke remained because here probably was his home, and he could help the little group of believers who mourned to see the others leave.

Thessalonica, then as now a great commercial city with a magnificent harbour, lay on the Roman road some ninety miles southwest of Philippi; and the mission-

aries chose it as their next field, instead of Amphipolis or Apollonia through which they had to pass on the way. Probably the meager fruits of the work in Philippi had made Paul feel that it was unprofitable to tarry in cities where there were no synagogues and consequently very few "God-fearing" Gentiles,—the most receptive hearers of the gospel. In the synagogue at Thessalonica he found many of these, who promptly became believers; and though few Jews were converted, and the synagogue was closed against him after three Sabbaths, the work went on among the Gentiles for a long time,—long enough for Lydia and the other friends at Philippi to send him gifts for his needs twice (Phil. 4:16), thus supplementing what he himself earned by working day and night (I Thess. 2:9). The letter he afterwards wrote to the Thessalonians contains a striking description of the manner in which Paul and his companions preached the gospel of God among them in behaviour as well as in words and cared for the converts as a father for his children or as a nurse for her charge (I Thess. 2:1-12); it is most profitable reading for all missionaries. The church founded in Thessalonica was composed mainly of poor people (II Cor. 8:2), but included the wives of a number of the leading men of the city. Macedonian women had a higher position and exerted more influence than their sisters in Athens and Corinth; and for that reason mention is specially made of their conversion (17:4, 12). The Jews must have been sore over the loss of these prominent women from their synagogue; and doubtless this was one reason why they were jealous and began a persecution which was long and bitter (I Thess. 2:14-16). They stirred up the dregs of the city to make a riotous assault upon the house of Jason, where they thought to

find Paul and Silas at some meeting of the Christians; and as the men they sought were not there, they seized Jason and his companions, and dragged them before the city rulers on the charge of receiving and abetting revolutionaries who were setting up Jesus in the place of Caesar. There was always danger that exhortations to obey Christ might be interpreted as treason; and for this reason the words king and kingdom,—so often on the lips of Jesus,—were seldom used by the apostles; but Paul had been preaching much about the coming of Christ (17:3; II Thess. 2:5), which would easily be understood to signify the overthrow of the Roman emperor. The charge against Jason and his associates was a most serious one; but evidently the city rulers knew it was baseless, for their action was the mildest possible under the circumstances,—they took security from them and let them go. What was the security to secure? Some say it was that Paul should leave the city and not return. They point out that Paul says Satan hindered his return (I Thess. 2:18), and they think that he would consider Jason's pledge a most cunning device of Satan because, though he was willing to risk his own life by returning, he could not as a Christian gentleman bring his friends into trouble. But since he was twice on the point of returning (I Thess. 2:17) and did not soon give up the hope to return (Id. 3:11), this explanation is hardly satisfactory. More probably the hindrance was the malignity of Paul's enemies, which he would feel to be Satanic, or else that oft recurring illness,—the "thorn in the flesh,"—which he calls a messenger of Satan (II Cor. 12:7); and the security given by Jason and others was simply bonds to keep the peace. Even thus the Christian religion was placed under a ban as tending to excite tumult; and

Paul with his attendant, Silas, would best leave the city at once, lest the mob at sight of them should rouse again. If they were seized and brought before the rulers, they might not be let off as easily as Jason had been. So that very night, though they were reluctant to leave, the brethren sent them away. Unfortunately their departure did not end the persecution, and the Thessalonian Christians passed through as bitter a season as the early believers in Jerusalem (I Thess. 2:14).

Beroea, the city to which the brethren sent Paul and Silas, and where Timothy soon joined them, was some forty miles from Thessalonica on a branch road and in another district of Macedonia. The reception here was most encouraging. The Jews were open-minded and gave the apostolic teaching a ready hearing, testing it by their own scriptures, with the result that many believed, and with them many prominent Gentile women and their husbands. The Christians of the first century are often represented as obscure and lowly people:—undoubtedly the majority were such, for they form the majority in any community,—as Lincoln once said, "God must think a good deal of the common people for He has made a lot of them;" but Paul's churches both in Macedonia and elsewhere, always contained a fair proportion of men and women distinguished for position, education or wealth. It was the rabble, and not the promiuent people, who readily roused against the Christians, and delighted in persecuting them. "Throughout the early centuries the city mob,—most superstitious, uneducated, frivolous, swayed by the most commonplace motives,—was everywhere the most dangerous and unfailing enemy of Christianity, and often carried

the imperial officials further than they wished in the way of persecution" (Ramsay). This was the case in Philippi and Thessalonica, and it bade fair to be repeated in Beroea. The Thessalonian Jews, when they learned of Paul's success here, came and stirred up the crowd against him, making it dangerous for him to remain. This time the brethren sent him out of the province of Macedonia; and, either for protection or because he was suffering in body as well as mind, some of them went with him all the way to Athens. Whether they had Athens in mind when they hurried from Beroea, or fixed upon it when they reached the nearest seaport and found a vessel about to sail thither, is unimportant. In Paul's thought Athens was simply a waiting place until he could return to Macedonia, the field to which the Lord had called him and which he would not abandon unless divinely commanded to do so. Silas and Timothy remained in Beroea that they might bring him word whenever the way was clear for his return.

3. In Athens.

The parting charge of Paul to his friends as they left him in Athens was that Silas and Timothy should come as soon as possible: he chafed under inactivity, and longed to hear the latest news from his churches. The two men came shortly, but with no cheering word;—the fury of the Thessalonian persecutors had not abated, the Christians were suffering greatly, and his return was still blocked. So he sent them back again,—Timothy to Thessalonica with messages of counsel and comfort (I Thess. 3:1 f.), and Silas probably to Philippi to learn whether that church also was in trouble (II Cor. 11:8-9); and "left at Athens alone," he settled himself for another period of anxious

waiting. But for him to remain silent was impossible, especially in such a city as Athens,—a city puffed up with conceit of knowledge yet despising the heavenly wisdom, worshipping a multitude of deities but ignorant of God. To him with his Jewish training the wonderful Greek sculpture was simply repulsive, and the city, adorned everywhere with statues of gods and goddesses, seemed full of idols. He felt there was sore need of the message he burned to proclaim. Moreover, Athens thronged with sons of Roman nobles, sent there to be educated; and none of their teachers, Epicurean or Stoic, was giving them the true preparation for a righteous and useful life. Paul's heart, which ever went out towards young men, yearned to reach in some way these future rulers of the Empire. In his boyhood he had lived in a university city, so the atmosphere of this most famous of university cities was not strange; and while now he was a persecuted and despised Christian missionary, he was also a Roman gentleman, acquainted with letters and philosophy, and able to hold his own with the Athenian teachers. Accordingly, though the synagogue was open to him and he preached in it, his daily resort was the market-place, the centre of all the city life, where like a Christian Socrates, he entered into debate with whomever he met. Paul never was inconspicuous long, and now he soon had a crowd surrounding him whenever he spoke; and though some sneered and others were puzzled, all listened. The curious idea that he was speaking of more than one deity when he preached Jesus and the resurrection (17:18), must have arisen from the fact that resurrection (anastasis) in Greek is a feminine noun, and might be the name of a goddess, especially as the Athenians worshipped many abstract deities such as

mercy, shame, energy. The charge that he was setting forth "strange gods," i.e., those not allowed in the city, was similar to that made against Socrates, and in earlier, stricter days might have brought on him a similar fate.

There was in Athens a court, called the Areopagus because it held its meetings on the hill of that name (Mar's Hill), which had a general oversight of the morals and education of the city; and as soon as Paul fairly began work, he was brought before that court to give a statement of what he was teaching. There in the midst of the judges, with a crowd of idle, inquisitive listeners surrounding them, he made his famous speech (17 : 22 f.). Apart from its impressive contents it is an admirable illustration of his generous recognition of the truths in heathen religions, and his skill in adapting himself to his audiences, or, as he would put it, becoming "all things to all men that I may by all means save some" (I Cor. 9 : 22). Beginning with a courteous, though slightly equivocal, compliment upon their religiousness as shown by the countless objects of worship and especially by an altar dedicated even to an unknown god, he said that his mission was to tell of the unknown God to whom their ignorant worship bore witness. Then in eloquent words on a level with the highest Greek thought and adorned with quotations from the Greek poets, he set forth the nature and work of the One God, the relations of all men to Him and to one another, and the absurdity of idolatry. Next, he would have preached Christ; but, as he pointed out the need of repentance in preparation for a day of judgment, and the proof from His resurrection that God had appointed Jesus to be the judge of the world, the court decided it had heard enough and adjourned.

The earlier part of his speech had been listened to with only qualified approval by the surrounding audience,—the proud Greek would not agree that God had made him of one with Jew and barbarian,—and his words about the resurrection, a doctrine so novel to Greek ears, made some scoff and others desire to hear more. There was no opportunity to tell them more; the verdict of the judges was that Paul should not be allowed to teach and must leave the city (18: 1). Timothy and Silas had not yet had time to return; so Paul crossed the isthmus to Corinth, fifty miles away, there to wait for them. His brief labours in Athens were not wholly in vain; one of the judges of the Areopagus, Dionysius, and a woman of the street, Damaris, and certain others became believers. But we hear nothing of a church in Athens. Self-conceit, shallow philosophy and flippancy form a poor soil for the word of God.

4. In Corinth.

Corinth, the capital of Achaia, was a great seaport, famous for its wealth, and notorious for its licentious worship of Aphrodite; its life would in many ways be like that of Antioch in Syria with which Paul was so familiar. He came to it expecting to stay only a few weeks; he did stay nearly two years. What he planned was to wait there in loneliness till word came that he might return to Macedonia; what he accomplished was the creation of a strong church, which from its location was in touch with almost the whole Roman world, and which we know more intimately than any other of the first century. The strain of long-continued persecution, the burden of sympathy for his friends in trouble, the discouragement from the scanty fruit of his labours in Athens, and possibly a recurrence of his "thorn in the

flesh," had worn him down physically (I Cor. 2:3); so at first he undertook no missionary work except a little discussion in the synagogue each Sabbath. But work for daily bread had to be sought promptly, as his funds by this time must have been exhausted. Accordingly, he found two fellow exiles, who were working at his own craft of tentmaking, and joined them in residence and occupation. They were a Pontian Jew, Aquila, and his wife Priscilla or Prisca; and they had recently, say in 49 A.D., been forced to leave Rome when Claudius ended the constant disturbances between Christian Jews and their unconverted brethren by expelling both parties. Probably they already were Christians; and of the two Priscilla was either the natural leader or else, as Ramsay thinks, a Roman lady of higher rank, for her name is usually placed first by Luke and Paul. The thoughts that filled Paul's mind as he toiled at the loom day after day can be gathered from his own statements (I Cor. 2:1 f.). He felt that his preaching in Athens had made so little impression because he had striven to meet philosophers with philosophy, and to win hearers by excellency of speech, instead of giving himself wholly to a direct presentation of the gospel itself. He had hesitated to hold up the cross in that university city lest the cultured Greeks might jeer at it. But now he recognized that a crucified Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and he determined henceforth to have no other theme.

So passed the slow days of waiting until the arrival of Silas and Timothy; when the one freed Paul's hands from labour by a gift of funds from the church in Philippi (II Cor. 11:8-9), and the other lifted a burden from Paul's heart by the tidings that the Thessalonians, though still sore beset, were standing fast in

the Lord (I Thess. 3:6 f.). His return to Macedonia remained unadvisable; but later on it might come about (3:11); and meanwhile Corinth was the field to which the Lord had directed his steps. Cheered in spirit, released from the loom, and assisted by his trained fellow-workers, Paul gave himself to witnessing for Christ among the Jews (Acts 18:5). His increased activity soon produced its usual effect of setting the Jews in hostile array, and closing the synagogue against him; whereupon he publicly and dramatically declared that henceforth he would go to the Gentiles, and he boldly opened a preaching-place the very next door to the synagogue in the house of Titus Justus, a God-fearing Gentile who probably was already a convert. The exasperation of the Jews at this was small compared with their rage when Crispus, the ruler of their synagogue, was converted with all his household, and was baptized by Paul himself, though the apostle usually left the work of baptism to others (I Cor. 1:14). Not many other Jews became believers, but many Gentiles did, among whom were Gaius, noted for his hospitality (Rom. 16:23) and the household, probably the domestic slaves, of Stephanas, "the first-fruits of Achaia" (I Cor. 16:15). Promising as was his work in Corinth, Paul felt that he must soon end it by returning to Macedonia, and feared that it might even sooner be ended by a persecution like that in Thessalonica. But just at this point there came, as at Troas, a vision in the night which made a turning-point and shaped his future course. The Lord told him to remain in Corinth, to preach without fear of enemies, and to rest assured that his labours would win many souls. Accordingly he settled down for a prolonged stay, and was transformed from an itinerant evangelist into the

pastor of a struggling church in a great, godless metropolis. The care of converts, the Christian nurture of children, the instruction of adults, the discipline of the wayward, the reclamation of the lapsed, the ministry to the poor and the sick, the comforting of those in sorrow, the constant fight against surrounding forces of evil,—all these duties and privileges of a pastor's life, the apostle now came to know intimately. It was a rich experience, increasing his acquaintance with the needs of humanity and with the ability of the gospel of Christ to supply them. Some of its fruits are preserved for us in Paul's letters to this church in Corinth.

We know only one incident of the months that followed. The Jews did not succeed in blocking Paul's work because, probably, they could not gain the support of the authorities; but when Gallio, an older brother of Seneca and a man of high character and genial spirit, was made proconsul of Achaia in the summer of 51 A.D., they were hopeful of success, and brought Paul before him, asserting that what the apostle taught was not orthodox Judaism, and therefore could not claim exemption from the Roman law against foreign religions. With vociferous assertions and involved explanations of the differences between the two creeds, they wearied and disgusted Gallio. It seemed to him a matter of mere names and words, unimportant and of no interest; at best, it was a controversy which they had full right to settle in their synagogue; so without waiting to hear Paul's reply, he ordered the courtroom cleared of the whole noisy, excited crowd. The upshot of the matter was that Sosthenes, ruler of the synagogue, received a beating even before they left the room, while Gallio looked on with indifference or tacit approval. Who beat Sosthenes and why, will never be

known:—was it the Gentiles who took this opportunity to pay off old scores with the Jews, or had this ruler of the synagogue also become a Christian (cf. I Cor. 1:1), and so, failing to punish Paul, the Jews pounded him? This was the second time that Paul had appeared before a proconsul (13:7); and Luke tells the incident to show that the Roman government in the early days of Christianity was uniformly friendly. The attitude of these two high officials may have encouraged Paul later on to make his appeal to Caesar.

5. The Two Letters to the Thessalonians.

The churches that Paul founded have long since ceased to exist; but some of the letters he wrote to them are in our hands to-day and are his most lasting monument, though doubtless they were what he valued least, counting them merely an imperfect substitute for a personal visit. With the exception of Romans he wrote them hurriedly, never dreaming that they would be treasured throughout the centuries and become second only to the words of Jesus in formative power. Had he foreseen this, could he have written them? Would not the tremendous responsibility of framing each separate sentence have paralyzed his pen? We are accustomed to call them epistles; but if we make the distinction that a letter is simply an imperfect substitute for one side of a conversation while an epistle is a disguised form of an essay or treatise, Paul's epistles are all of them really letters. They are what he would say if he could talk with the recipients; and they cannot be understood without bearing in mind both his circumstances and theirs. To read them as we do a book, thinking only of their contents, is misleading; and to treat them as theological essays is absurdly unfair.

They all are written to Christians whom he knew or, in the case of Romans, wished to know; and they are intensely personal, pulsing with emotion, full of sudden transitions, broken in utterance sometimes,—as if he were thinking aloud. What we ever marvel at is the way in which he pours forth the deepest Christian truths with evident expectation that his readers will at once grasp them, though we to-day have to ask aid from commentators and expositors. In form the letters are much the same as the heathen letters of that period; and their contents can usually be divided into a doctrinal part followed by a practical part and closing with personal messages. With the exception of Philemon they are written by an amanuensis (cf. Rom. 16:22), probably because Paul had bad eyesight or was a poor penman (Gal. 4:15; 6:11); but there are always added a few lines in his own hand to authenticate the whole.

First Thessalonians was called forth by the report—and perhaps a letter from the church—which Timothy brought when he came down from Thessalonica to Corinth, a report whose contents can be inferred from the messages Paul at once sent back, probably using some other messenger than Timothy who would be needed in Corinth. After a salutation in which he courteously joins his companions with himself, as he usually did, the apostle first gives thanks to God for the zeal and remarkable success of the Thessalonian brethren in spreading far and wide the word of the Lord (1:1-10). Next, he has to defend himself against those enemies who, having succeeded in driving him away, are now striving to kill his influence by slandering his life and motives,—aided in this by the fact that Paul came to Thessalonica a complete stranger and

departed after a comparatively brief stay just when persecution was arising. This forces him to point out how unselfishly and unblameably he lived and laboured when he founded the church (2:1-12); which, in turn, calls for a second thanksgiving for the way in which the church accepted his divine message even at the cost of bitter persecution (13-16). In proof of his affection, and perhaps to repel the charge that he had ceased to care for them, he dwells at some length upon his repeated attempts to return, and his joy when Timothy brought glad tidings of their faith and love and remembrance of him (2:17-3:10); and he closes this part of his letter with a prayer that he may meet them again, and that through increasing love toward all men their hearts may be established blameless in holiness (11-13). Thus far the tenor of his words has been encouragement and sympathy; now it changes to warning and exhortation. Personal purity was a virtue that had to be constantly enjoined upon Gentile converts because the heathen standard was low, and the temptations were many. Though Paul had warned the believers in Thessalonica against fornication, and doubtless had given them the Jerusalem decrees, he has to warn them again, because their persecution by the Jews would dispose them to reject the decrees, and his favourite doctrine of Christian liberty could easily be perverted into license for licentiousness. Now he sternly declares that the sin of unchastity is not merely a rejection of his own injunctions,—it is a rejection of God, resulting in loss of His Holy Spirit (4:1-8).

The remainder of the letter is devoted to correcting certain unfortunate results of his former teaching. He had dwelt upon the time when Christ would return and be again with His people,—in technical phrase, the

Parousia (II Thess. 2:5); and the thought of this glorious day had greatly helped them to endure their present afflictions. But over-emphasis of Christ's coming was producing certain effects, often reproduced in later centuries. The believers were restless, impatient of control, neglecting ordinary tasks; some had ceased to work, and had to be supported by the rest; and all were striving to fix the day and hour of the coming of the Lord. It was taken for granted that believers who died before the Parousia would miss the joys of that blessed time; and this added a new sorrow to death. Paul endeavours to set the church right in these matters. He enjoins them to show brotherly love to the needy, but to aim at a life of steady, faithful, manual labour such as will win respect and supply their wants (4:9-12). He explains that by a resurrection those asleep in Jesus will share His coming equally with those still alive (13-18), and that we cannot know the day of the Lord, but should ever be ready for the surprise of its dawn (5:1-11). And he exhorts them to maintain a church-life of order, peace, brotherly helpfulness, recognition of the Spirit, and abstinence from every form of evil (12-22). The dictation closes with a prayer for their complete sanctification (23-24). Then Paul takes the stylus from the amanuensis, and with his own hand adds to the papyrus roll a few brief messages, ending with a benediction, such as he would use in closing a conversation with them (25-28).

Second Thessalonians is little more than a postscript to the first letter. It resembles the first so strongly that some critics maintain it is unauthentic,—a spurious imitation; but had it differed strongly from the first, other critics would say that Paul could not have been its author. Verily, the two-edged sword of

hostile criticism is a formidable weapon. The news that came back from Thessalonica, apparently in another letter from the church, was not encouraging:—the persecution still continued; and, as often happens in times of great stress and danger, certain enthusiasts, professing to speak in the spirit or to find hidden meanings in the Scriptures or to develop the thought of Paul's first letter (2:2) were now proclaiming the Parousia as just at hand, thus causing much excitement and making quiet labour and healthy church-life almost impossible. Paul could not ignore this unfortunate state of things, so he wrote again. He begins as before with words of praise and heartening (1:3-12). Then he beseeches them not to be beguiled into thinking that Jesus is soon to come, for certain other events still in the future must precede the day of the Lord (2:1-12). Let the brethren, therefore, with confidence of salvation hold fast to the teachings they have received (13-15); and may Christ Himself and the Father comfort and establish them (16). He asks in turn their prayers for the work and workers in Corinth (3:1-5); and under penalty of discipline by the church if they refuse to obey, he sternly commands the idle and disorderly to imitate the life of orderly, self-supporting labour led by him when among them (6-15). A benediction and the usual autograph messages close the letter (16-18).

To the present-day missionary these two letters are of great value in their disclosure of the way Paul lived and laboured and loved when striving to plant a church in a heathen city, and the practical lessons in Christian life he had to impress upon his converts. To the theologian they are of less importance, their main contribution being in the field of eschatology,—

a field from which the reaper usually gathers many weeds and little wheat. We have seen the reasons why the early Christians believed that Jesus would soon return; evidently Paul at this time shared that belief; but though he thought the event would take place in his generation (I Thess. 4:17), he was sure it was not immediately at hand. The passage stating what must first take place (II Thess. 2:1-12) is hopelessly obscure, partly because to understand it we must know what Paul had told the Thessalonians when he was with them (Id. 2:5), and partly because, like most apocalyptic messages, it was put in enigmatic form so that if it fell into the hands of enemies, they could not grasp its meaning. From this precaution we may infer that "the man of sin" and "that which restraineth" were political persons or powers; more than this is mere guesswork, mightily attractive to some minds. In later years Paul seems either to have recognized that the Kingdom of God would be established not by sudden catastrophe but by slow growth, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28), or else to have learned from such experiences as those at Thessalonica the wisdom of not emphasizing the Parousia. The time and circumstances of the coming of Our Lord are as unprofitable subjects for constant thought as the time and circumstances of one's own death, and for the same reason,—few can dwell upon them without neglecting the commonplace duties of ordinary life, and losing the calm, trustful spirit of Christ's little ones.

6. The Return to Antioch.

Paul had laboured in Corinth eighteen months and more; he had founded a church and brought it to the

point where other men could care for it; there was no imperative reason for his remaining longer. What was in his heart we know from his own statements later,—he longed to go to Rome, the center of the great empire he was striving to win for Christ (Rom. 1:9-15; 15:14-29). Nothing was easier than to make the journey, for ships from Corinth were sailing thither every week; but, as he reveals, there were two obstacles in the way. One was largely a matter of sentiment:—he took pride in doing pioneer work, aiming always to preach the gospel where Christ was not already known; and Christianity had reached Rome long before this time. This obstacle he got around by deciding that Rome might be treated, not as a field of work, but as merely a stopping-place, where he could visit the brethren and impart to them some spiritual gifts on his way to Spain. The other obstacle was more serious:—he felt that he must finish his task in the East before he went on a journey to the far West, perhaps never to return. He had planted the gospel in three great Roman provinces, Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia; but Asia remained unevangelized. If he could establish a church in Ephesus, the capital of that province, and also could revisit the churches already established, he might rightly feel that he had "no more place in these regions." With this program before him he sailed from Cenchreae, the eastern harbour of Corinth, for Syria. What the vow was that caused him to shear his head before he went on board ship, we are not told and it is idle to guess; but we are interested to see that, despite all his liberty from the Law, he still showed in this Jewish vow the persistent influence of his early training.

Ephesus was a port at which a ship would naturally

stop for passengers and lading; and as Paul's ship stayed there over a Sabbath, he seized the opportunity to preach in the synagogue. The Jews listened with deep interest; possibly Epaenetus, "the first fruits of Asia" (Rom. 16:5) was then converted; and they urged Paul to stay longer. The request showed that the door to Asia, previously closed (16:6), was now open; yet Paul was not quite ready to enter it. An explanation found in some early texts is that he was desirous first to attend a feast at Jerusalem; more likely his desire was to revisit Antioch. That city was now the headquarters of Gentile missions with the great leaders, Peter, Barnabas, Paul himself and others, closely connected with it and often there. That he should wish to keep in touch with his fellow-workers and their work was natural: he craved the companionship of those whose aims were his own, and he knew that the advance upon heathendom could not be united and well-ordered unless the leaders took counsel together. Anyone who has been for months and years in lonely mission work can understand what a season in Antioch would mean to Paul. He dared not tarry now in Ephesus; for the time, we suppose, was late in the autumn of 51 A.D., and travel would soon be difficult or impossible. So he took his leave with a promise to return, doing this with an easier mind because Priscilla and Aquila, who had crossed from Corinth with him, were going to remain at Ephesus until he returned.

Paul sailed to Caesarea where, leaving the ship, "he went up and saluted the church and went down to Antioch" (18:22). Some hold that the church here designated was the one at Caesarea; but the terms to go up and to go down are always used for a visit to

Jerusalem, that city on the crest of the Judean hills; and the significant "If God will," which accompanied his promise to return to Ephesus, hints of perils such as confronted him in the Jewish stronghold (cf. 21:11; 23:12). It is objected that Paul would not visit the mother church now because he had no gift to bring its poor; but what proof is there that he did not have a gift? The church in Corinth was able to provide it; and perhaps Paul's eagerness to carry it in person explains why he sailed to Caesarea instead of taking the direct route by land or sea to Antioch. True, Luke does not mention it; but neither does he mention the gift brought at the next visit, save incidentally when reporting Paul's speech before Felix (24:17). Moreover, Paul when telling the Galatians about the injunction to remember the poor, adds "Which very thing I have also taken pains to do" (Gal. 2:10, Burton's rendering): must not his reference be to a gift at this particular visit? How it was received we do not know, save as we infer a qualified approval from the effort he made to collect a large and representative offering for his next visit. There was little to detain him in Jerusalem except, it may be, to fulfil his vow; and after greeting the church he hastened to Antioch, the city which in his homelessness seemed more to him like home than any other. Whether Silas accompanied him as far as Jerusalem, his original residence, and there remained or what became of him, we do not know: Corinth is the last place where we hear of him, unless he is the Silvanus who was Peter's amanuensis (I Peter 5:12).

Paul had been away from Antioch nearly three years, and had travelled more than two thousand miles. What had he accomplished? He had planted

churches in two important provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, and the gospel was spreading rapidly in both of them. With the sagacity of a great leader in selecting able assistants he had gathered a noble band of fellow-workers, some of whom we shall meet again and some whose later career is not recorded. He had developed his scheme of a world-wide evangelization in which province after province should be claimed for Christ by planting churches at the great centres from which the evangel could be carried into the smaller places. And he had been forced in his long stay at Corinth to study the problems of applied Christianity, and to consider what the gospel means for the family as well as for the individual. Unfortunately a similar consideration of what the gospel means for the state, was prevented by the political disability of Christians in that century. Had Paul found occasion to turn his mind to this, and had he set forth in his strong way the ideal of a Christian state, how different might have been the course of Christendom in later ages!

IX

THE BATTLE FOR CHRISTIAN EQUALITY

BECAUSE the second half of Acts is devoted to Paul, and because so many of his letters have been preserved, he seems to us the one great missionary in the Apostolic Age. It is hard to realize that other Christian workers must have been nearly, if not quite, as active and devoted. Who were they? Who preached Christ to Alexandria, that second largest city of the Roman world with far more Jews than Jerusalem? Who carried the gospel through the broad Mesopotamian valley and along the shores of the Black Sea? What were the Twelve themselves doing in all these years? In what form was the message of salvation presented by preachers whose training and spiritual experience differed greatly from that of Paul? And what were the problems placed before them by races unlike the peoples of Asia Minor, Greece and Italy? Here is a great and fascinating chapter of history which must remain unwritten, save a few fragmentary paragraphs. The foundation stones of the Christian church stand foursquare and firm, but they are buried out of sight. Even the mother church in Jerusalem fades from our view, the moment it ceases to touch the life of Paul; and we almost forget that it remained the recognized leader until the Jews plunged into their mad revolt against Rome. The first chapter of its history was under Peter, and we have already studied it. The second chapter was under James, the brother of Jesus; let us now consider it.

1. James, the Brother of Jesus.

John tells us that up to the closing months of Jesus' public ministry His brethren did not believe on Him, i.e., did not accept Him as the Messiah (John 7:5). Their unbelief is not surprising when we consider how erroneous were their Messianic expectations, and how hard and enigmatic were some of His sayings; even the apostles with all the help that came from daily intercourse were slow to recognize His Messiahship. His brethren may have loved and venerated Him, and yet have feared that claims so tremendous as His were begotten by an enthusiasm which had unbalanced His mind (Mark 3:21). Probably it was the resurrection appearance to James that changed the perplexity of the four brothers into full belief; for we find them awaiting Pentecost among the little group of believers (Acts 1:14). Henceforth they seem to occupy a definite and unique position, midway between the original apostles and the ordinary disciples (I Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19). James remained in Jerusalem while the apostles increasingly were in foreign lands; and his constant presence as well as his ability caused him to be recognized as the head of the church there and, therefore, of all the churches in Palestine (Gal. 2:9; Acts 15:13; 21:18). Indeed, it is not impossible that he had been duly chosen to fill the place in the Twelve left vacant by the death of James, brother of John. By his sternly austere life he won the title of James the Just, and gained high favor with all the Jews; but in 61 A.D., when the death of Festus left Palestine without a Roman procurator until the arrival of Albinus, the Sadducees led by the high priest, Ananus, took advantage of this opportunity, and put him and certain other Christians to death

by stoning on the trumped up charge of violating the sacred laws. Symeon, nephew of Joseph and son of Clopas, was chosen by the church as his successor; and probably if the Jerusalem church after 70 A.D. had not sunk into insignificance, there might have been an ecclesiastical dynasty of the kinsmen of Jesus.

2. The Epistle of James.

When the canon of the New Testament was being formed in the second and third centuries, certain books won a place in it only after much dispute as to whether they were authoritative, sacred writings. One of these disputed books (antilegomena) was the Epistle of James, some of the objections to it being that it was not written by an apostle or under apostolic direction, that it contained little distinctly Christian teaching, and that it contradicted Paul as to the relative value of faith and works. Though the book is firmly in the canon, the objections still have to be considered. Who did write it? The superscription says, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1), which might designate any devout Christian bearing the very common name of James, but would seem to describe a James so well known as to need no further identification. Next to the brother of John, who died too early to be the author, the only prominent James in apostolic times is the brother of Jesus; and tradition, perhaps for this reason, uniformly ascribed the Epistle to him. The contents disclose little concerning the authorship, and this little may be used both for and against James the Just. Some scholars maintain he could not have written such good Greek, and did not have the attitude revealed in the epistle towards the Law, and would not have failed to point to the example

of Jesus when urging prayer, patience and the like; so they conclude that the writer was an unknown James; and they find reasons for believing that the book was not written until the end of the first century or later. Other equally able scholars pronounce these arguments unconvincing, and hold that the undeveloped theology, the constant echo of the ethical teachings of Jesus, the strongly Jewish tone and topics, and the attitude of authority in the admonitions, all point to James the Just. Accordingly they ascribe the epistle to him, and pronounce it one of the earliest books in the New Testament. Fortunately the value of the epistle as a guide in Christian living is not involved in this dispute. Doubt about human authorship does not unsettle certainty of divine authorship, since that is recognized by the accents of the Holy Ghost in the message. Without entering into a long discussion, or professing to make more than a somewhat arbitrary decision, let us accept James the Just as the author, and fix the date of the epistle at 47 or 48 A.D.

James is writing to "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," i.e., his Christian brethren who live outside of the Holy Land. The Antioch visit of "certain from James" shows that he was mindful of them. He thinks of them as all sons of Abraham (2:21) because only a few Gentiles as yet have become believers; and he seems well acquainted with their condition, so they cannot be living far away, say in Syria and Phoenicia. They are poor (2:5), oppressed by the rich (2:6 f.), undergoing many trials (1:2) and surrounded by temptations (1:12). They have the Jewish ambition to become rabbis (3:1), and show obsequiousness to the wealthy even in their places of worship (2:1 f.). With the spirit of the Pharisee they

emphasize creed more than deed (2:14 f.) and ritual more than life (1:26 f.). Their evident need both of encouragement and of rebuke and warning prompts James to write to them. His letter is a series of practical messages, much resembling those of the Jewish sages, yet so strongly filled with echoes of the Sermon on the Mount as to make absurd the supposition of some critics that it is an earlier Jewish essay changed into a Christian epistle by prefixing the address and inserting the name of Christ once (1:1; 2:1). Its strongly Jewish tone is natural, if the writer had absorbed the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, and was writing to Jewish Christians. There is no logical order in the contents of the book:—one thought suggests another, and a word in one passage is often taken as the keynote of the following passage, much after the manner of an untrained speaker when extemporizing. But James knows exactly what his readers need, and there is no uncertainty in his messages. They deal with the trials of life and the temptations arising from them (1:2-18), the importance of doing God's word (1:19-27), the sin of respect of persons (2:1-13), the worthlessness of orthodox creed when divorced from Christian deed (2:14-26), the dangers that lie before one who is ambitious to set himself up as a teacher (3:1-18). There are warnings against the sins that arise from a double-minded attempt to please both God and the world (4:1-17), woes upon the extortionate rich (5:1-6), and exhortations to patience and prayer (5:7-20). It is a sober, drab-coloured life which James sets forth,—a life of patient, single-minded devotion to duty with no ecstatic vision or thrill of overpowering emotion. Christ's coming is looked forward to, but rather as the labourer looks for the end of a hard day

than as the bride looks for the bridegroom. Here is a different type of mind from that of Paul or John, and a different revelation of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Fortunate for the prosaic man that James wrote!

The theology in the epistle of James is small in amount, and of the same simple, undeveloped character as that of the early speeches in Acts. The contradiction of Paul as to the relative value of faith and works is more apparent than real, and arises—as such contradictions often do—from attaching different meanings to the same word. By faith as contrasted with works (2:14 f.), James means the intellectual acceptance of Christian doctrines, a matter purely of the head; while faith, as Paul uses the word, is the complete surrender of the heart to Christ, resulting in a vital union with Him. The works James declares to be indispensable are the fruits of the new life,—the outward manifestation of the indwelling spirit of Jesus; the works Paul pronounces useless are those by which men think to merit salvation, especially the works of the Jewish Law. Evidently the two writers are in agreement, though their words seem contradictory. Nevertheless, James' well-known adherence to the Law might seem to uphold the party of the circumcision in turning his epistle into a weapon against Paul and the Gentile Christians.

3. The Trouble in Galatia.

The party in the church who sought to bring all Gentile Christians under the yoke of the Law had thus far been unsuccessful but remained undiscouraged. A convenient title for them is the Judaizers, a term coined from Paul's question to Cephas, "How com-

pellest thou the Gentiles to Judaize?"—i.e., to live as do the Jews (Gal. 2:14). Because Paul denounced them so strongly, we must not conclude that all Judaizers acted from evil motives. Undoubtedly some wished the Gentiles to live as the Jews in order that they themselves might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ by the Jews (Gal. 6:12), or that they might destroy the influence of Paul, whom they hated, and take his place with the Gentile converts (4:17); or that they might gain glory as successful proselytisers (6:13). But there were others whose own religious life was so closely connected with keeping the Law that they could not deem any other manner of life equally consecrated, and who verily thought they did God service, and Gentile Christians the greatest kindness, by insisting that the Law must be kept by all believers. Even the Judaizer of to-day,—the man who stirs up trouble by insisting that all Christians shall adopt his own precious forms and observances,—may really be filled with a zeal for God and a sincere love for his fellow-man. Hence the duty of forbearance toward him.

After the case of Titus and the council at Jerusalem, the Judaizers could no longer disturb Gentile Christians by insisting, "To be saved or to have fellowship with us you must keep the Law;" but it was still possible to declare, "In order to become better Christians, you should keep the Law." That which might not be imposed as a necessity or a condition, could be offered as a counsel of perfection, appealing to the very noblest natures. It did not take long for the Judaizers to perceive this and to act accordingly. Their tactics were those of certain sects on modern mission fields:—instead of starting their own missions

in the wide and needy Roman world, they systematically sought out the churches already planted by Paul, and sought to win over his converts. He must have feared this, having perhaps caught some hint of it at the council; for when he visited the Galatian churches on his second missionary journey and delivered the decrees, he strongly warned them against anyone who should preach a gospel different from that which he had given them (Gal. 1:6-9). His fear soon proved to be well-founded. Sometime while he was labouring in Macedonia or Corinth, the Judaizers came to Galatia. Who they were we do not know, since Paul wisely refrains from naming them. All hope of a happy termination ends when a battle over doctrine is allowed to become an attack upon persons. But though Paul did not assail them by name, his letter shows that he was assailed by them shamefully. They declared he had received his apostleship from Ananias at Damascus or from the church at Antioch, and not directly from Christ, and therefore was inferior to the Twelve, as he himself had shown by accepting their decrees. Also, he had not known Jesus; so his gospel was gained at second-hand, and whatever in it did not harmonize with the teachings of the apostles must be erroneous. Indeed, he had not fully and fairly given the Galatians his gospel; for while evidently he believed in circumcision,—witness the case of Timothy,—he had sought to please them by declaring it was not necessary. In short, he was an incompetent and deceitful evangelist. As for the gospel he brought, they said it was only the beggarly rudiments of the Christian religion. Faith in Christ is merely an infant step towards salvation; to reach the full blessings of the Messianic kingdom promised to the seed of David, one

must be circumcised and keep the Law. The liberty of which Paul taught them to boast, was really his base concession to fleshly appetites, and led to all kinds of licentiousness. While not asserting that the Law was absolutely necessary, the Judaizers made it so important as to be practically indispensable.

There was great likelihood that these enemies of Paul would succeed in supplanting him. The Gentile Christians were inclined towards Judaistic Christianity because their old heathen religions were strongly ritualistic; therefore, with little difficulty they could be persuaded to observe the various Jewish sacred days and ceremonies (Gal. 4:10). Also, they were familiar with the idea of an outer and an inner circle of membership in religious societies, including esoteric teachings for the duly initiated. The Judaizers would represent their teachings as those of such an inner circle in the Christian church, admission to which was gained by circumcision. This would appeal to the Galatians; and in their desire for the higher life some seem already to have submitted to circumcision (6:12), while others were wavering. The leaven brought by these new teachers was beginning to permeate the church (5:9-10). Other dangers, also, lurked in the present situation. The converts who remained faithful to Paul's teachings were tempted to make special display of their freedom by indulging in those very excesses that the Judaizers declared were the natural fruit of his gospel (5:13 f.); the normal activities of the church were hindered by the formation of hostile camps; and the followers of the new doctrine were withholding their gifts from the teachers of the old (6:6). Evidently there was need of prompt and vigourous action, if all that Paul had thus

far wrought for Gentile Christianity was not to be destroyed.

4. The Letter to the Galatians.

When and where did Paul write his letter to the Galatians? He had visited the Galatian churches twice before he wrote (Gal. 4:13), but were they some unknown churches in North Galatia or Antioch, Iconium and the others in South Galatia? If, as is increasingly believed, they were the latter, his second visit was when he delivered the decrees (Acts 16:4); and the letter was written either later on in the second missionary journey or afterward. Apparently the Judaizers had not been long at work (Gal. 1:6); but how soon after the council at Jerusalem is it likely they would begin? Does the close resemblance of Galatians to Romans prove that the two were written about the same time, the date being, therefore, as late as shortly before Paul's last visit to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25 f.)? These and similar questions bearing on the time and place of the epistle, might be discussed interminably. Rather, let us accept Professor Ramsay's solution of the problem as simple and fairly satisfactory. He supposes that when Paul sailed for Syria (Acts 18:18), Timothy accompanied him as far as Ephesus, and then took the overland route to his home at Lystra. As he passed through South Galatia he learned what the Judaizers were doing; and he brought the alarming tidings to Paul when he joined him at Antioch in Syria. We might expect that the apostle would hasten forthwith to Galatia: but he had barely begun his visit in Antioch; the winter had set in, making travel through the mountain passes of Tarsus difficult; his health may have hindered the

journey; and his experience with the Thessalonians had shown that a letter might accomplish the purpose of a visit. Accordingly, he now wrote and sent from Antioch his famous Epistle to the Galatians. Though he includes in the salutation "all the brethren that are with me," the letter is entirely his own, beginning with "I marvel" and ending with "Henceforth let no man trouble me." It was dictated at white heat, and still glows with the apostle's indignation and apprehension, and throughout it all is his "overwhelming, burning conviction of immediate divine vocation." Romans is a calm statement of doctrine; while Galatians is a surging outburst of emotion, with denunciation, expostulation, appeal, warning, entreaty, command, poured forth tumultuously. There is no other letter in which the great apostle so unbares his heart.

Omitting the usual introductory thanksgiving and prayer, Paul rushes at once into a defence of himself and his gospel. Indeed, the very salutation (1:1-5) is so worded as to be the beginning of this defence. The first section of the letter (1:6-2:21) is a refutation of the charge that his knowledge and authority as a teacher were gained at second-hand, thus making him inferior to the Twelve. After a sharp rebuke of the Galatians and a denunciation of their new teachers (1:6-10), he declares that the gospel preached by him was not received from man but came directly from God through revelation of Jesus Christ (11-12); and in proof of this he gives a brief but most valuable sketch of his life, especially of his relations with the heads of the church at Jerusalem. His zeal as a Jewish persecutor, his conversion, the sojourn in Damascus and Arabia, the first visit in Jerusalem with Peter, the years of obscurity in Syria and Cilicia, the

second visit in Jerusalem when the battle was fought over Titus, the latter controversy with Peter at Antioch (1:13-2:21),—all this is outlined to show that he could not have been a neophyte of the apostles, but on the contrary had compelled them to recognize him as their equal. In this review he says nothing about the council visit in Jerusalem because the Galatians had already heard about that from his own lips when he delivered the decrees to them.

His words of rebuke to Peter at Antioch form the transition to the next section of the letter (3:1-5:1), in which he defends his gospel, especially his teaching of justification by faith instead of by the works of the Law, against the charge that it is imperfect and inferior. We may call this the doctrinal section, if we bear in mind that Paul's primary purpose in writing it was not theological instruction but the strengthening of his converts against the guileful teachings of the Judaizers. In interpreting it we must read between the lines much that had been given the Galatians during his former visits. He begins by an appeal to their own personal experience of the value of faith in the days before the Judaizers appeared (3:1-5). Next, because the Judaizers had promised that if the Galatians took on the Law, they would inherit the blessings of Abraham, he affirms that the true sons of Abraham are they who, like Abraham, are of the faith (6-9); and that the Law instead of bringing a blessing brings a curse through human inability to keep it (10-14). That the blessing does not depend upon keeping the Law is further proved by the fact that it was granted by an irrevocable promise to the true seed of Abraham long before the Law was given (15-18). The Law was added later on to reveal sin through the

transgressions of it, and thus to prepare the way for faith in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin (19-22). Those who are under the Law, instead of enjoying a high position, are like children under the constant oversight of a servant (23-29), or infant heirs under the control of a guardian (4: 1-7). Why then turn back from the free, intelligent service of God to the bondage of a childish and heathenish observance of Jewish sacred times (8-11)? Here Paul interjects a touching personal appeal, pointing out how the Galatians formerly considered him their best friend, and lamenting that now they are being turned against him (12-20). And he ends in true rabbinical fashion by using the story of Sarah and Hagar as an allegory to prove that liberty is the birthright of the Gentile Christians, and that the Judaizers are repeating ancient history when persecuting them (4: 21-5: 1).

The closing section (5: 2-6: 18) is devoted to practical exhortations. First, he urges those who are thinking of circumcision, to consider that by this act they fall away from grace and undertake the whole obligation of the Law. Circumcision is of as little value in the Christian life as uncircumcision; only faith working through love avails. As for those slanderous enemies who urge circumcision, would that they were revealing their true nature by adopting self-mutilation like priests of Cybele (5: 2-12)! Next, he appeals to those who have the Christian freedom, not to make it an excuse for yielding to the lust of the flesh, but instead to show in their lives the fruit of the Spirit (5: 13-26). A group of various injunctions follows, bearing mainly upon duties toward fellow-Christians (6: 1-10). Finally, in his own handwrit-

ing, made emphatic by its size, Paul warns once more against the Judaizers, and points to the scars of his own sufferings for Christ as the visible seal of his apostleship (11-18).

The epistle to the Galatians places us in the very heart of Paul's great battle to save his converts from the fetters of legalism. Throughout the long struggle he was confronted with the Jewish Law; but that included the law of conscience resting upon the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14-15), which, therefore, was included in his contention that "a man is justified not by the works of the Law, but through faith in the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 2:16). For the followers of Christ there is no law, save the law of love (5:14); they are not driven by commands, they are led by the Spirit (5:18). How faith justifies is stated more fully in Romans; but what Paul means by faith is most clearly revealed here. Faith is not merely the acceptance of Christ's promises and teachings; it is the acceptance of Christ Himself,—the reception of Him in the heart, merging the recipient so completely in Him that he can truly say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (2:20). The experience may be pictured as a birth (3:27), a resurrection (2:20), a new act of creation (6:15). It results in such vital union that the life of the believer is henceforth a revelation of Christ (1:16); and because the Spirit of God's Son is in his heart, he can with confidence cry to God "Abba, Father" (4:6). All this is intensely mystical; but Paul was a mystic as well as a man of common sense; indeed, it was the harmonious blending of mysticism and practical wisdom that made him remarkable. Faith was for him both an ineffable experience at the hour of his conversion, and the daily

uplift of his life in the drudgery and tasks which everywhere confronted him. "That which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (2:20).

Any general survey of Paul's theology would take us outside the scope of the present volume; but we cannot pass without comment his description of the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit (5:16-24), because he has been charged by some with holding, as did many in the heathen world of his day and later, that man's body is vile, a source of pollution, and that salvation involves deliverance from it, partially by asceticism, fully by death. Such a charge would seem to be refuted by his clear statements that the body is for the Lord (I Cor. 6:13), a temple of the Holy Spirit in which to glorify God (Id. 19-20), and is to be presented to God a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1). But Paul's life of celibacy, his frequent and strong denunciation of sins of unchastity, and his emphatic statement "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage" (I Cor. 9:27), are often cited to prove that he was an ascetic; and specially his assignment of all sin to the flesh is held to place him among those who think that the body is the source of evil. Now, it is true that Paul sometimes means by the flesh the human body (2:20; 4:14) but he also gives the term a variety of other meanings, e.g., human beings in bodies (1:16; 2:16) and the whole visible, material side of human life (6:12) and all the natural powers and activities of man (Phil. 3:4). And when he is contrasting the flesh with the Spirit (Gal. (5:16-24; Rom. 8:4 f.), he gives the word a still broader meaning. As he looks forth upon human life he sees there two great and warring realms. One is

that of "the flesh" or "the natural man" (I Cor. 2:14) or "the old man" (Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9). The dwellers in it are at enmity with God, and under the condemnation of His law which—whether whispered by conscience or thundered at Mount Sinai—they are unwilling and unable to obey. It is called the realm of the flesh because, perhaps, the most evident sins are sensual, yet those most numerous and most deadly are spiritual,—envyings, strife, wraths, idolatry and the like. The other realm is that of "the Spirit" or "the kingdom of the Son" (Col. 1:13) or "the new man" (Col. 3:10),—the man created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10). In that realm there is peace with God; and the only law is love, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). It is called the realm of the Spirit because the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ,—these being identical,—controls all its activities and produces all its fruits. One enters that realm when by faith he receives the Spirit and yields to His sway. With deep humility and constant gratitude Paul reckoned himself a member of that realm. And yet he recognized that the fight against the lusts of the flesh and the powers of evil must be unceasing. For this reason he kept his body in bondage and strove to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, counting himself not to have already obtained or already to be made perfect, but pressing onward unto the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And his exhortation to all his brethren is to do the same.

X

PAUL'S YEARS AT EPHESUS

PAUL "spent some time" at Antioch (Acts 18:23), probably until the spring of 52 A.D. Navigation ceased in the winter, and snow made the mountain pass across the Tarsus extremely difficult. He could not easily get back to Ephesus, even if he wished to. Apparently he planned to return by sea, the easiest and speediest route; for in his letter to the Galatians he makes no mention of intending to visit them,—indeed, indicates that a visit is impracticable (4:20). Some change in the situation, or further news from Galatia, made him take the land-route so that he could meet his wavering converts. The departure from Antioch is usually called the beginning of the third missionary journey; but it was with no sense of a new undertaking, and with no formal dismissal and Godspeed by the Christians of Antioch, that he left the city for the last time. He was simply returning to Ephesus to take up the work waiting him there. Of his experiences as he passed through Galatia we are told nothing, save that he visited the churches in order and made firm the disciples (Acts 18:23). Apparently his letter had wrought more effectively than at first he supposed, and his presence completed the defeat of the Judaizers. Out of this experience may have arisen his later practice, which we shall soon have occasion to note, of preparing the way for a personal visit in settlement of difficulties by

sending ahead a letter and waiting its effect. If the Galatians had reached the point of emphatically rejecting the Judaizers, they would be disposed to go still further and break off all connection with the Jewish-Christian church. This tendency must be checked, and would best be met by some countermeasure; so it may have been at this time that Paul first urged upon them the duty and privilege of sending a gift to "the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem" (I Cor. 16:1; Rom. 15:26).

1. Ephesus and the Temple of Artemis.

Asia was one of the richest and most important of the Roman provinces; and Ephesus, its capital, was the largest, wealthiest and most influential of all the cities in which Paul undertook to plant a Christian church. It was a seaport at the mouth of the river Cayuster, and an outlet for all the rich commerce from the East. The flourishing cities of Asia,—Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colosse, Miletus and others less familiar to us because not mentioned in the New Testament,—all looked to Ephesus as their metropolis. For this reason the Roman proconsul chose it as his residence. And the importance of the province made the proconsulship one of the most responsible and highly prized positions in the Roman government, open only to those who had previously been consuls at Rome. But Ephesus itself was a free city with a democratic government. The popular assembly which governed it met regularly three times each month (Acts 19:39); and the secretary (19:35), who acted as chairman, was a very influential person. Another notable person residing in Ephesus was the Asiarch, an officer selected probably

annually to preside over the emperor worship throughout the province. In Ephesus and other important cities of Asia special temples were erected for this worship, which was emphasized as a proof of loyalty and a bond of unity; and the Asiarch as a high-priest looked after them and bore the expense of the games and festivities connected with them. In a certain sense he was, as the name indicates, the ruler of the province, and his office, which could be filled only by a man of great wealth, was one of highest honour and most impressive outward splendour. Probably when he retired from office he still retained his title,—as did the Jewish high-priest; and thus in Paul's day there were several Asiarchs in Ephesus (19:31).

The glory of the city was its temple to Artemis,—one of the seven wonders of the world. Enormous in size, beautiful with marble and ivory and cyprus and cedar, it had been more than two hundred years in building; and worshippers throughout the province had helped defray its great cost. Though the goddess worshipped at its altar was identified by the Greeks with Artemis and by the Romans with Diana, she was really a primitive nature deity whose worship was a recognition of earth's powers of fecundity. Her most sacred image was a block of wood or ivory, so old that it was fabled to have fallen from heaven, rudely carved in part into a head and a bust covered with breasts, the symbol of fertility. Her world-wide fame was expressed in the favourite and distinctive title, Great Artemis of the Ephesians. The temple was an asylum for fugitives from oppression or from justice; and the Croesuses of that day deposited their treasures in it for safe-keeping. An army of priests and their helpers, both men and women, belonged to it; and the ma-

jority of the Ephesians gained their support from it in various ways, of which making silver shrines—little models of the inner sanctuary with its image of the goddess—for sale to worshippers as votive offerings or souvenirs (19:24) was only one. With good reason Ephesus gave the worship of Artemis popular and official support, and gloried in being the temple-keeper (literally, the temple-sweeper) of the great goddess (19:35). In no other city where Paul laboured was a heathen cult so well organized, active and powerful.

2. Apollos and His Disciples.

The number of incipient Christian sects in the first century, and the varying degrees of belief in Christ, are seldom realized. We think of the stream of Christian thought in those early days as flowing with a steady, onward movement of life-giving waters; in reality there were eddies and cross-currents, backwaters and stagnant pools and side streams which led off nowhere. In regard to the Jewish Law, for example, the different positions taken range all the way from what seems almost pure Judaism to what threatens to become dangerous lawlessness. At Ephesus we find another illustration of the varied forms of Christian belief. There came to that city, soon after Paul's passing visit, a learned and eloquent Jew named Apollos. He was already a believer; and he began boldly to proclaim Jesus in the synagogue, thereby gaining the little group of disciples whom Paul ran across later on (19:1-7). Luke does not state that these men were converts of Apollos; but he clearly implies it by giving Paul's dealings with them, as a sequel to the story of Apollos, before taking up in regular fashion

the account of what Paul did in Ephesus. Apollos was an Alexandrian, but it is unlikely that he had gained his knowledge of Jesus in that city; for Alexandria, because of its situation and its large Jewish population, was in constant and close communication with Jerusalem, and any Christian residing in it would know pretty exactly what the church in Jerusalem held as Christian doctrine; but Apollos, while acquainted with the baptism of John and able to teach accurately the things concerning Jesus (18:25), was ignorant of Christian baptism and of the gift (or possibly of the very existence) of the Holy Spirit (19:2). Some scholars suppose him to have been a disciple of John the Baptist, but his Christian knowledge is too great for that. Evidently he had learned the full story of Jesus' life and death, including the mission of the Baptist, but had heard nothing about Pentecost and the later life of the church. This would be the case if the person by whom he had been orally taught the way of the Lord (18:25) was a disciple who had never returned to Jerusalem after the fatal Passover week. There must have been many such; and they could hand on to others only the incomplete Christian knowledge they themselves had gained. The religious ideas of Apollos would be similar to those of a man of to-day who knew only the Gospel of Mark, or of a man who in obedience to the cry, "Back to Jesus," rejected all the later teachings of the church. No wonder that when Priscilla and Aquila listened to Apollos they soon recognized that his message was incomplete and his spiritual power undeveloped; and, taking him to their home, they "expounded to him the way of God more accurately" (18:26). Whether they baptized him, as Paul did the men who had re-

ceived only the Johannine baptism (19:1-7), we are not told; it would seem probable that they did, and that this fuller entrance into the realm of Christian truth brought to him the same influx of the Holy Spirit. From Priscilla and Aquila he learned, too, of the existence of a Christian church in Corinth; and a strong desire to enjoy its privileges, all new to him, filled his heart. Encouraged by the brethren from that church who happened to be in Ephesus, and receiving letters of recommendation from them, he crossed to Achaia. And there his courage, eloquence and profound knowledge of the Old Testament made him not only a powerful disputant with the Jews, but also, as we shall see, the leader of the Corinthian church as long as he remained there. Later on he was again in Ephesus and with Paul (I Cor. 16:12).

3. The Conquest of Asia.

When Paul had finished his mission in Galatia, he hastened by the shortest route, that through "the upper country" (19:1), to Ephesus. The Jews who before had urged him to remain, now welcomed his return; the synagogue was at his service as a preaching-place; Priscilla and Aquila would take him again into their home; and probably a little handful of believers had already been won by their labours. Thus the work began most favourably. In no other city did the Jews give such attentive and prolonged hearing to the gospel; and though at the end of three months Paul withdrew with his followers from the synagogue, he was not forced to do this, but thought it best because his teaching was increasingly interrupted by the objections and counter-arguments of the disaffected. Public disputations are not a fruitful means of win-

ning souls. The lecture-room of Tyrannus was secured by the Christians, and here Paul set forth the new faith daily "from the fifth to the tenth hour" (Codex Bezae), i.e., from about eleven to four o'clock,—a period of the day when Tyrannus would have finished with his classes, and when the labour and business of the city largely ceased. That lecture-room of Tyrannus is the first step of the Christian church from a room in the house of some member to a special building for its use.

We can form a pretty clear picture of the regular daily life of Paul. From early morning until nearly noon,—the working hours at Ephesus,—he is toiling, probably at the loom, to earn bread for himself and his companions (20:34); for the next five hours he is to be found at the lecture-room, meeting disciples and enquirers, holding religious services, planning evangelistic work with his helpers, and busy with all the multifarious demands upon a missionary's time and strength; then he goes forth as a visitor "from house to house" as long as the day lasts, "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (20:20 f.). He found that "a great door and effectual" was opened unto him (I Cor. 16:9), through which the gospel could pass to the whole province of Asia. For men from the lesser cities came constantly to the metropolis on business or pleasure or the worship of Artemis; and if in their sojourn they met Paul and accepted his message, they would carry it back to their homes. Such was the way apparently that Christianity reached Colosse, Hierapolis, Laodicea and other cities in which churches sprang up. And doubtless Paul himself went forth on evangelistic missions. His stay

at Ephesus lasted in round numbers three years (20:31)—possibly he had learned at Corinth the value of prolonged work;—and he would not remain in the city all that time. Then, too, he had with him for more or less of the time a noble band of workers, Timothy, Apollos, Priscilla, Titus, Epaenetus and others (I Cor. 16:10, 12, 19; II Cor. 8:16; Rom. 16:5) whom he could send forth to scatter the seed of truth. Working out from Ephesus with deliberate plans and corresponding success he was evangelizing all Asia (19:10, 26); and when towards the end of his stay he wrote to Corinth, he could say "The churches of Asia salute you" (I Cor. 16:19).

"A great door and effectual opened unto me," was an excellent reason why Paul should remain so long at Ephesus; and "there are many adversaries" was an even better one. On the fighting line is the place for the soldier of Christ. Through the influence of the temple of Artemis the whole city was full of evil forces. Ephesus was noted for its devotion to black art. The streets swarmed with magicians, enchanters, exorcists and sorcerers, who wrought "in craftiness, after the wiles of error, the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 4:14; 5:11). Formulae of incantation by which spirits were supposed to be controlled through the potency of the "name that is named" (Eph. 1:21), were known as "Ephesian letters." Specimens of such charms, some even naming the name of Jesus along with other potent names, have recently been discovered. We might expect that Paul would confound this horde of greedy, insolent miracle-mongers by a manifestation of the truly supernatural,—the sham is best exposed by a presentation of the real; and Luke tells us that "God wrought extraordinary

miracles by the hands of Paul" (Acts (19:11). His further statement that articles of clothing worn by Paul were thought by these superstitious Ephesians to have healing power (even as the shadow of Peter was by some in Jerusalem, 5:15), is not improbable; though we cannot believe that Paul did anything to encourage such credulity. The somewhat confused account of the experiences of certain strolling Jewish exorcists (19:13-16) is perfectly credible; but that the sudden fury of a demoniac should create consternation in the whole city, and produce a general forsaking of magic arts and an exaltation of Christ, is incredible; and the Lord Jesus Himself never suffered His name to be magnified in such a way (Luke 4:41). So, too, the burning of the books of magic may have been a natural expression of the renunciation of magic arts; but the theatrical bonfire and the childish reckoning of the importance of the deed by a prodigious estimate of the value of the books, are not after the spirit of the great apostle. When we notice that Luke has almost nothing to tell about Paul's long sojourn in Ephesus except these fantastic stories, we are forced to conclude that his sources of information here were scanty and less trustworthy than usual. Certainly in Paul's own humble and touching review of his work in Ephesus (20:18-35), there is nothing to confirm Luke's conclusion that it was by such peculiar ways as he relates that the word of the Lord grew and prevailed (19:20).

To Luke's very incomplete account of what Paul encountered at Ephesus we can add certain brief but suggestive hints from the two letters to the Corinthians and the last chapter of Romans. If that last chapter was written to the church at Rome, it is most perplex-

ing. How should Paul know so intimately and affectionately such a large number of persons in a city he had never visited, and how did it happen that so many of them had shared his work and even his prison in previous years? But if we suppose, as many able scholars do, that it was written to his former comrades at Ephesus, the puzzle is solved. And we can easily imagine how a note to the Ephesians came to be annexed to the Epistle to the Romans. That epistle was Paul's most careful and elaborate statement of certain truths which he considered his special message to the Christian world. When he had completed it, he naturally would wish to have his other churches read it, just as he did in the instance of Colossians (4:16). Phoebe, a worthy and efficient member of the church at Cenchreae, the eastern harbour of Corinth, was going to Ephesus; so Paul had her take along for that church a copy of his epistle, and also gave her a little note of introduction containing many greetings to his friends. The note, preserved in Ephesus, was naturally treated in later days as a supplement to the epistle, and has come down to us in that form.

Phoebe's note introduces us to a notable group of Paul's fellow-workers, and reveals how tender and strong the ties were that bound him to them. But it also gives hints of sore trials and great dangers in the days when they had laboured together. Andronicus and Junias, two Jews ("my kinsmen"), who had been Christians earlier than Paul and had been highly thought of by the apostles, have been his fellow-prisoners; and Priscilla and Aquila have risked their own lives for the life of Paul (Rom. 16:4, 7). This harmonizes with what is revealed in his two letters to the Corinthians. In one letter, written after he had been

at Ephesus about two years, he says that he and others are running risks every hour and facing death daily; and he refers to some special occasion when he "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus" (I Cor. 15:30-32). And in another, written soon after the close of the Ephesian ministry, he refers to a time, apparently recent, when in overwhelming distress he despaired even of life but was divinely delivered from a terrible death (II Cor. 1:8-10). What these trying experiences were, and what caused them, we never shall know, except that some were "by the plots of the Jews" (Acts 20:19). Was Paul actually forced to fight with wild beasts in the arena; or is that statement a metaphor for his struggle with even more savage men?

4. The Close of the Work.

The gospel message had been carried throughout Asia. In Ephesus little groups of believers, each forming a "church in the house" (Rom. 16:5, 10, 11, 14, 15), were parts of a strong Ephesian church whose influence was felt throughout the city; and in other cities of the province there were similar groups. With good reason Paul felt that his work in these parts was drawing to a close, and that now he could enter upon his cherished plan of going to Rome and thence to Spain. As a final preparation he must first pay a farewell visit to his churches in Macedonia and Achaia, and send or take to Jerusalem the contributions which were being gathered for the poor of that church. To ensure that these would be ready when he came and to correct certain troubles in Corinth, he sent Timothy and Erastus ahead into Macedonia and Achaia, while he gave the last touches to his work in Asia (Acts 19:21-22; I Cor. 16:1-11). He proposed

to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost of 55 A.D., but sudden peril forced him to leave sooner.

When the whole atmosphere is full of hostility against Christianity, no one can predict from what quarter a thunderbolt may be launched. In this instance it came from the silversmiths. The demand for their shrines was falling off; and Demetrius, one of their number, laid the matter before a council of craftsmen, and vehemently declared that the rapid spread of Paul's teachings threatened not only their profits but the prosperity of the city and the majesty of the great goddess herself. His hearers were easily aroused: no nerve is so sensitive as that which leads to the pocketbook. Representing their selfish interest as civic pride and religious devotion, they quickly stirred up the whole excitable city; and, when they failed to find Paul, they dragged two of his companions, Gaius and Alexander, followed by an ever-increasing mob, into the great open-air theater where popular assemblies were held. If they thought to have a special trial here, it was made impossible by the confusion and uproar of the senseless mob, who had no idea what the trouble was, save that in some way the worship of Artemis was threatened by men who opposed idol-worship, i.e., by the Jews as well as the Christians, for the people generally would not distinguish between the two. There was danger that such excitement would lead to bloodshed; but when Paul proposed to calm it by addressing the mob, his fellow-Christians would not allow him to hazard his life by going into the theater, and certain friendly Asiarchs sent the same advice. The wisdom of this was evident when the Jews put forward Alexander as a spokesman for themselves. The sight of his Jewish features caused a howl of rage

in which his voice was drowned. For two hours the mob heralded its devotion by shouting in unison, "Great Artemis of the Ephesians," until exhaustion brought some measure of quiet. Then the city secretary in a brief, sensible speech assured them that their fears for Artemis were groundless, referred Demetrius and the craftsmen to the courts for redress if they had been wronged, and pointed out how sternly the Roman government might call the citizens to account for this riot. The people, thus brought to their senses, dispersed and the uproar ceased. But Demetrius had accomplished his purpose; for Paul could do no more work in the excited city, and it was not prudent for him to prolong his stay in it. Accordingly after bidding farewell to his friends, he left for Macedonia, going up the coast by land or by sea to Troas where he could find a ship for Philippi.

XI

THE LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS

WHETHER Paul, during the years he lived in Ephesus, ever crossed the Aegean and visited the church of Corinth, is a mooted question. Ships sailing to Corinth would be in the harbour, the voyage required only a few days, and Paul's heart yearned to see his former converts. But, as we shall note, there were reasons why his presence in Corinth might hinder rather than help the church, and be painful to both him and it. He certainly planned more than once to make the visit (II Cor. 12:14; 13:1-2); but his words about these plans may be read to imply that he carried them out or the reverse. Even without a visit, he would be constantly informed about the condition of the Corinthian church through letters from it and visits from such of its members as came to Ephesus on business or travel. And as occasion required he sent letters to the church, more doubtless than have been preserved. These letters of Paul are extremely precious, not so much for their doctrinal teachings,—though they touch on some high themes,—as for their light upon church life and problems, and their revelation of Paul himself. In the form we now have them they are two in number; but there is reason to think that we should treat these two as originally four.

1. The First Letter, now II Cor. 6:14-7:1.

A seaport city, even in a Christian land, often reeks

with sensuality; prostitution may be forbidden, yet it abounds. But in the great maritime city of Corinth, the worship of Venus made the prostitute a sacred person; and the general belief that venery was as natural and blameless as eating or drinking, made sexual indulgence a matter of course. "To Corinthianize" was a synonym for to live in debauchery. Evidently the maintenance of Christian standards of personal purity by a church whose members had been reared in such an atmosphere and were exposed to such temptations, was exceedingly difficult. Neither the pressure of public opinion nor an inbred sense of shame strengthened the resolution to flee fornication. Nor was it easy for those who had received little Christian instruction to determine what the relation between the sexes ought to be. Some went to the extreme of asceticism, pronouncing even lawful marriage a sin, and pointing to Paul's example of celibacy. Others justified self-indulgence by Paul's doctrine of liberty, or argued that fleshly acts have no moral character since the flesh perishes and religion is a matter of the spirit (I Cor. 6:12-13). These latter deemed that Christianity was glorified by their disregard of all restraints, even of those observed when formerly they were heathen. And one of their number outraged the sense of decency in his heathen neighbours by entering into marital relations with his stepmother,—probably herself a heathen, since Paul passes no sentence upon her, and while his father still lived under the same roof (Id. 5:1). Revolting as was this incestuous household, some of the Corinthian church boasted of it as a proof of the liberty they had gained in Christ Jesus!

We can hardly suppose that this case of incest had arisen, or, at least, was known to Paul, when he wrote

the letter to which he refers in I Cor. 5:9; but he did know the tendency to sensual sins; and in that letter—so he says—he enjoined them "to have no company with fornicators." The letter is lost; but many scholars think a portion of it has been preserved for us as II Cor. 6:14-7:1. That passage fits in with such an injunction and evidently it does not belong in its present place, for it has no connection with what precedes or follows, and when it is removed we find that 7:2 joins on to 6:11 as an unbroken appeal for larger sympathy and love. How it may have come to be where it is, we will consider later. What else the letter contained we do not know; but its effect was other than what Paul hoped. Though the withdrawal he commanded was from immoral church members only, he was understood to mean from all persons guilty of impurity, which would include practically all heathen neighbours. The ascetic wing of the church treated this command as an endorsement of their inclination to shut themselves entirely away from the world; while the opposite wing pointed to its impracticability as sufficient reason for rejecting Paul's advice altogether, and following their own untrammelled desires.

2. The Second Letter, now I Corinthians.

About a year before Paul left Ephesus he sent Titus and "the brother," whoever he was (cf. II Cor. 8:18), to Corinth to arrange about a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (II Cor. 12:18; 8:6, 10). Possibly Titus carried the lost letter of warning against fornicators, which may have contained an announcement of the first of Paul's three plans to visit Corinth (12:14). The suggestion of a gift to their Jewish brethren was cordially received, and the Corinthians

started in to collect the money (9:2); whereupon Titus returned and may have been sent to Galatia on a similar mission (I Cor. 16:1). Next, there came to Paul a report brought by "them of Chloe" that the church of Corinth was full of contentions, the Greek tendency towards partizanship showing itself in the marshalling of the different factions under the names of separate leaders (I Cor. 1:10 f.). There were the original members who still remained loyal to Paul; there were others who had been won or won over by Apollos. A third party, dating perhaps after the return of Apollos to Ephesus, and led by some teacher or teachers from Jerusalem, had adopted Peter as its head. And still a fourth party boasted that it recognized no human leader and followed Christ alone. Thus the little church of Corinth—like the great church of Christendom to-day—was sadly divided when it needed to be a unit against its many foes within and without. How much of theological dissension underlay these divisions we can only surmise. We are predisposed to find the familiar dispute about the obligations of the Law. In that case the three views that the Law is binding on no one, on Jewish Christians only, and on everyone, might be held by the parties of Paul, Peter and Christ respectively; while a fourth view, that the Law is binding in a spiritualized form on all (the view set forth in the epistle to Hebrews) might be that of the party of Apollos. But between Paul and Apollos themselves there is evident harmony, and in his rebuke of the factions Paul says nothing about the Law. So we conclude that the strife was personal rather than doctrinal.

The party spirit has not yet torn the church asunder; but lest it should do so, some one must visit Corinth and cast out the demon of dissension. Paul's work in

Ephesus was too pressing for him to leave it (I Cor. 16:9); Apollos for some reason could not or would not go (16:12); the next best person was Timothy who had laboured with Paul in founding the church. Accordingly Timothy was sent together with Erastus, a leading member of the Corinthian church (Rom. 16:23) who was then in Ephesus, and certain others; and they were to go to Corinth by the way of Macedonia, probably that they might initiate the missionary collection in the northern churches (Acts 19:22; I Cor. 4:17; 16:10).

We imagine it was soon after they left that there came three friends of Paul from Corinth,—Stephanas, one of his earliest converts (1 Cor. 1:16), Fortunatus and Achaicus,—bringing a gift (16:17) and also a letter from his loyal friends asking his advice on problems that were perplexing and dividing the church (7:1). They gave him further information about the parties, and reported the case of incest and an epidemic of lawsuits prosecuted in heathen courts. As they were returning at once, Paul wrote the letter we call First Corinthians for them to carry back. It would arrive in advance of Timothy, and help him in calming the disturbed church when he came (16:10-11). In the letter Paul again promises to visit Corinth, going by the way of Macedonia, and to remain there perhaps all the following winter; he plans to start after Pentecost (4:18 f.; 16:5 f.). This letter to the Corinthians is the rich fruit of Paul's experience as a pastor both at Corinth and at Ephesus. It is our clearest picture of church life in the Apostolic Age, and it reveals Paul's great sagacity in dealing with the problems that are forced upon the leader of a church. Especially do we notice how he brings to bear upon every question, even

a seemingly petty one, some great, eternal truth in which lies the answer. This shows how we ourselves should treat similar questions, and also how far Paul's injunctions are binding upon us to-day. The rules he laid down have to be changed with changing circumstances, but the unchanging truth in accordance with which the old rules were framed, must be used consistently in framing the new.

First Corinthians presupposes so much knowledge of the condition of the church that any outline of its contents cannot give their full meaning. After the usual salutation and prayer of thanksgiving (1:1-9), Paul begins with the factions in the church. He purposely limits his censure to the parties of Paul and Apollos because he would not seem to criticize the other leaders, and everyone knew that he and Apollos were in no way rivals. The root of the party strife is the emphasis of worthless human distinctions. "The wisdom of the world," of which the party of Apollos boasts, despises the message of the cross and those who accept it, and treats as foolishness the hidden wisdom of God which is given to those who have the mind of Christ. Instead of glorying in Paul or Apollos, the apostle says, regard them simply as God's servants,—yours also since you are Christ's and Christ is God's,—doing the work He assigns, and to be judged by Him alone. Your complacency and conceit are in startling contrast to the contempt and suffering heaped upon us. Whatever other men may be to you, I am your father: remember my teachings and pattern after me, that I may not have cause to discipline you when I come (1:10-4:21). Passing on to other matters that require correction, Paul commands the church to purge out the incestuous man, and lays down the procedure of his excommunica-

tion (5:1-8). The injunction to keep away from fornicators, given in his first letter, is explained as referring only to those who are within the church circle (9-13). The absurdity and shame of resorting to heathen courts for the settlement of differences which, indeed, ought never to have arisen, is emphasized (6:1-11). A warning against fornication follows. This comes in abruptly, and may be another fragment of the first letter; although the specious arguments by which the Corinthians justified licentiousness needed to be answered and the sin to be denounced repeatedly (12-20).

Now Paul can turn to the questions propounded in the letter, and first to those about marriage. His general thought is that Jesus will return and establish a new, marriageless order of life, and that the present dangers and hardships of Christian living make further marriages and families unadvisable; better for all to remain as they now are: nevertheless, in a city like Corinth there are many temptations against which marriage is a safeguard needed by some; and the ascetics who condemn it are in the wrong. The application of this general principle to all the different classes of married and unmarried persons is not easy; and Paul in doing it makes a careful distinction between what is his individual judgment and what he knows to be the commandment of the Lord (7:1-40). The next question was about eating things sacrificed to idols, either at heathen sacrificial feasts or when bought in the markets. Paul answers this at much length (8:1-11:1) because of its importance. In the answer is involved not only his interpretation of the Jerusalem decree to refrain from such food (Acts 15:29), but also the whole attitude of a Christian towards the surrounding heathen life in which the social and religious were al-

most inextricably interwoven. The question of the Corinthians is that of Indian Christians to-day about customs of caste, or Chinese Christians about ancestral tablets, or Japanese Christians about Shinto shrines. In our own land it arises in another form about certain occupations, amusements, beverages, books, whose connection with evil seems to some minds inseparable. As to its answer there are always two parties, the scrupulous and the charitable. Paul belonged to the latter but had much sympathy for the former. He agrees that an idol is nothing and cannot pollute a sacrifice; but he points out that knowledge of this fact should create, not contempt but tender regard for the brother who has not gained it, and a willingness to refrain from food offered to idols lest he be encouraged to eat when for him eating is a sin (8: 1-13). This is a restriction of Christian liberty, but for Christ's sake. Paul's own practice of not accepting support from his churches,—a practice that some malign,—is an example of such surrender of liberty in order to save others and win for himself a crown (9: 1-27). To those who deem that the church and its sacraments are sufficient safeguards amid the pollutions of heathen life, the story of Israel in the wilderness proclaims, Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (10: 1-13). Indeed, the vaunted power of the sacraments is itself a warning against sharing in idolatry; for if, as many think, the sacrifice to idols is a sacrifice to demons, then the idolatrous feast is communion with devils even as the Lord's Supper is communion with Christ (14-22). The Christian is free; but only to do that which is for his neighbour's good and for the glory of God: he must not be a stumbling-block to his brethren who abhor

idolatry or to heathen who are seeking Christianity (10:23-11:1).

In every land where women have been kept in ignorance, subjection and seclusion, the recognition granted them in Christ is revolutionary; and during their first enjoyment of Christian liberty they are liable to run into excesses. Such was the case in Corinth. A virtuous woman there appeared in public but rarely, and never without shrouding her head with a veil (peplum); but now some of the Christian women were discarding the veil as being a badge of inferiority. Such defiance of convention would pain the conservative members within the church, and create scandal among outsiders; so Paul forbade it. Unquestionably he was right in doing this; but he seems to flounder helplessly,—as all philosophers do,—in finding a reason why one particular form of dress is modest and another is not (11:2-16). The next abuse was dealt with in no uncertain terms. The love-feast of the church had become a scene of selfishness, discord and gluttony. Any real communion with Christ was impossible in it, and to partake of the Lord's Supper under such circumstances revealed an utter failure to recognize the significance of the sacrament. The displeasure of God might be read in the prevalence of illness in the church. Let the abuse be stopped at once (11:13-34). Still another thing that marred the Christian gatherings for worship was the disturbance caused by those who were eager to display their gift of speaking with tongues, believing it to be the highest manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. Their unintelligible outcries drowned the prophet's sober words of advice and cheer, and made the meeting seem a gathering of madmen. In his attempt to correct such dis-

order Paul begins with a discussion of spiritual gifts in general. The Holy Spirit dwells in every man who confesses Christ as Lord; for without His help such confession is impossible. And though there are diversities of spiritual gifts, they all proceed from one and the same Spirit (12:1-11). In the church, which is the body of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit are like powers of the different members of the human body,—each contributes to the welfare of the whole, and none is to be despised as base or useless. The greater gifts are to be most earnestly desired in work for Christ, yet there is a still more excellent way to serve Him (12:12-31). And here Paul breaks forth into his hymn in praise of love,—one of the most beautiful passages ever penned (13:1-13). Concerning tongues, it is a showy gift; but when measured by profitableness,—the true test of a gift's value,—it is not to be compared with prophecy; and its exercise, if not carefully regulated, will hinder rather than help the church. Speaking with tongues is not to be forbidden, but the disorder it is causing must be stopped (14:1-40).

The Christians of Corinth were much divided in their thought of the resurrection. Some accepted the Jewish idea that at the coming of the Messiah those who are to share His kingdom will come forth from the grave with their earthly bodies revived. Others scoffed at this as childish (cf. Acts 17:18, 32), and clung to some form of the Greek idea that the future life is in a purely disembodied state. Yet these latter may not have rejected the resurrection of Christ; for the thought that a god could die and rise again was familiar to them in the stories of Osiris and Attys. Paul has to deal with these various and contradictory ideas as he proceeds next to set forth the Christian doctrine of the

resurrection. He begins by rehearsing the proofs of Christ's resurrection (15:1-11), and declares that any who refuse to believe that the dead rise, must reject these proofs and all the faith and hope established by them (12-19). But since it is a fact that Christ has risen, those who sleep in Him will certainly in due time share His resurrection, and death will be abolished (20-28). Without such complete triumph over the grave, the future life is not worth the sacrifices of the present (29-34). Nevertheless, those who expect to have a body of flesh and blood in the resurrection, are mistaken. To every form of life God gives a body suited to its environment; and since the heavenly world is spiritual, the body raised from the dead for life in that world, will be a spiritual body, connected with the earthly somewhat as the standing wheat is with the seed (35-49). Such glorious investment with the spiritual, incorruptible body is our final victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ (50-58). The epistle closes with a brief suggestion about the collection, a number of personal details which we have already considered, and some autographic words of greeting (16:1-24). And with mingled hope and apprehension Paul entrusted it to his friends to bear to the troubled, distracted church across the Aegean.

3. The Third Letter, now II Corinthians 10-13.

Before Paul was driven from Ephesus by the riot, some unnamed person in Corinth had wronged him and a friend of his so grievously as to call forth a letter written with many tears out of much affliction and anguish of heart,—a letter so stern and bitter that afterward for a time Paul regretted writing it (II Cor. 2:4 f.; 7:12, 8). That the wrong-doer was not the in-

cestuous man but the leader of a large group in the church, is evident both from the personal injury Paul suffered and from the deep and widespread repentance and clearing aroused by Paul's rebuke (7:7-12). And the letter could not have been our First Corinthians;—that letter was not written with tears nor such as to be a cause for regret. Possibly the sorrowful letter is lost; but many scholars think that we have it preserved as the last four chapters of Second Corinthians. These chapters reveal an indignation, a sense of injustice and injury, and a painful necessity for self-vindication, that fit well with Paul's description of his state of mind when he wrote the sorrowful letter. And clearly they cannot have been written at the same period as the chapters now preceding them which are full of joy and praise. No man could write, "I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you" (7:16), and close his letter by saying "to them that have sinned heretofore and to all the rest, if I come again, I will not spare" but "deal sharply" (13:2, 10). We conclude, then, that our Second Corinthians is not one letter but a collection of Paul's letters to Corinth, viz.: a fragment of his first letter (6:14-7:1); a part, possibly nearly all, of his third and sorrowful letter (10:1-13:14); and the whole of his fourth letter. And it is not at all strange that these three should be put together in later days by someone who wished to preserve them, and therefore copied them upon one papyrus roll of convenient size. Unfortunately he took no pains to indicate their separate origin; doubtless it did not seem to him of importance. And what led him to insert 6:14-7:1 just where he did, we shall never know.

From the contents we can make a fair guess as to

what called forth this letter of sorrow. The opposition to Paul in Corinth was more bitter and extensive than he dreamed when he wrote I Corinthians. The leaders in it were certain men, probably from Jerusalem where Paul was unceasingly hated, who brought letters of commendation (10:12, 18; 12:11; cf. 3:1), and claimed to be special representatives of Christ (10:7; 13:3). False apostles and ministers of Satan, Paul calls them (11:13-15). They boasted of the works they had wrought (11:18 f.). They declared that Paul was not an apostle (12:11-12; 11:5), and that this was the real reason, though he had given another, why he did not demand support from the churches in which he laboured (11:7 f.; 12:13 f.). They sneered at the tone of authority in his letters when absent, as being very unlike his humble bearing and ineffective speech when present (10:8-10). They represented that his plan of a collection for the poor at Jerusalem was a crafty scheme for filling his own depleted purse (12:17-18; cf. 8:20). And when Timothy arrived as Paul's agent, they refused to accept him, and someone did him grievous wrong (7:12). It was the report of all this, brought back probably by Timothy himself, that called forth the letter, written out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears (2:4). The opening words, "Now I Paul myself entreat you," may indicate that he did not even employ an amanuensis. Titus was selected as the best person to carry it to the Corinthians. They had been friendly to him before; Paul was sure they would give him a kindly reception now. Indeed, despite all the pain they were causing, Paul seems to have felt that they were true at heart, and to have said so to Titus (7:14).

The letter does not admit of analysis:—logic and

emotion are never good yoke-fellows. Nor is it in all places easily understood. It is like an impassioned dialogue in which we can hear only one of the speakers. Phrases that his enemies had used in self-praise or hurled against Paul in abuse, are repeated by him with sarcastic or indignant comment. Charges are answered whereof we know little. The smoke of battle obscures our vision. But the letter is precious as a unique self-revelation of Paul. In no other letter does he so dwell upon himself and lift the veil from his years of missionary toils and dangers and sufferings and wondrous spiritual experiences. Yet, full as it is of self-defence, it was written, not as an *apologia pro vita sua* but as an agonizing effort to cast down the enemies of Christ and protect the church of Corinth. If by it the wrong-doers could be roused to penitence and self-probation, he would not have to deal sharply and sorrowfully with them when he came. For he had changed his plans once more,—the third time,—and now was resolved to go directly to Corinth before he went into Macedonia (1: 15 f.). But he did not wish to go until he had heard through Titus how the letter was received. This was the reason why, when a few weeks later he was driven from Ephesus, he went to Troas instead of directly to Corinth.

4. The Fourth Letter, now II Corinthians 1-9.

At Troas Paul found the door opened which had been closed against the gospel when he was there before (II Cor. 2: 12; Acts 16: 6 f.). But though he could not refuse to enter, his anxiety to know what his letter had wrought in Corinth made him too restless to remain. Others could carry on the work without him; so, because Titus was slow in coming with the craved report,

he crossed to Macedonia and met him somewhere on his way from Corinth. The tidings now received greatly refreshed his heart. The Corinthians had welcomed Titus, and the letter had stirred them to repentance and the needed reforms. The chief offender had been severely punished and was now truly penitent. A few still reiterated the old criticisms, and many felt that Paul's repeated failure to visit them as he had promised was reprehensible; but this was merely the rumble of a storm whose force was spent. Unfortunately the missionary collection, which Paul supposed to be in progress, had been stopped by the opposition of his slanderous enemies. It must be started anew at once, for the time of its close was drawing near. The state of the churches in Macedonia, as we shall see, held Paul there for the present; so, because Titus had begun the collection the previous year, Paul sent him back again to complete it with two unnamed assistants of whom Paul speaks so highly that we regret they cannot be identified (8:16-24). And by Titus he sent a letter which in tone and contents was in marked contrast to the one so recently preceding it. His great desire, everywhere evident in it, was to dispel the last clouds of bitterness and opposition, and to bind the church most firmly to himself once more. This letter is preserved in full except some closing words.

Paul joins Timothy with himself in the salutation, since the two had shared the wrong now forgiven (II Cor. 1:1-2). He begins with a prayer of thanksgiving for the comfort God has granted after what he has suffered both in spirit and in body, and for the assurance that henceforth in all sufferings and consolations the Corinthians and he will remain in unbroken fellowship (3-11). He has been sincere in his steadfast care for

them; and this should not be doubted despite his failure to pay the promised visit; for his change of plans came from his unchanging desire to cause them joy not sorrow, even as the painful letter was written not to make them sorry but to make them know his love (1:12-2:4). As for the offender who had been a source of sorrow to all, sufficient punishment has been inflicted upon him; now forgive and comfort him lest his soul be drowned in despair (2:5-11). The good news brought by Titus makes Paul thank God for this proof that his ministry in Christ is everywhere effectual (12-17). This is not self-praise, such as he was forced to use when he wrote before; he needs no letter of commendation, for the Corinthians themselves are such a letter written by Christ and read of all men (3:1-3). And it is not through his own power that he has worked, but through God who has made him the minister of a new covenant, life-giving, glorious, permanent and transforming, such as the old covenant which Moses ministered could not be (4-18). In the ministry of this covenant there can be nothing hidden or deceitful, though those who are blind to the gospel allege the contrary (4:1-6); and the apostle's weakness and persecutions, which they jeer at, are a reproduction of the life of Jesus,—all for the sake of the Corinthians (7-15). Therefore, he never loses heart; and his present afflictions seem light while he looks at things eternal, and is assured that presently he shall exchange this body of pain for the heavenly body, and be "at home with the Lord" (4:16-5:8). Whether at home or absent, his one aim is to be to be well-pleasing to Christ who is the judge of all (9-11). And the love of Christ, by whose death and risen life all things have been made new, forces him to undertake the ministry of reconciliation,

and on behalf of Christ to entreat them to be reconciled to God (5:11-6:2). All his sufferings, all his spiritual powers, all the paradoxes of his Christian life, are the credentials of this ministry (6:3-10); so he may appeal to the Corinthians to open their hearts to him, even as he holds them in his heart (6:11-13; 7:2-4). Once more he tells at fuller length the story of meeting Titus, and his joy over the report of how they had treated his letter and Titus himself (7:5-16). Then he turns to the subject of the collection (8:1-9:15), which we shall consider later. The concluding words of the epistle, as well as the opening salutation of the third epistle, were lost or omitted when the two were joined together. A papyrus manuscript was always brittle, and if much used, as the instructions about the collection would be, might become hopelessly broken.

XII

PAUL'S PREPARATION FOR SPAIN

AMBITIOUS to preach the gospel where the name of Christ has not been named," so Paul describes himself. Like Francis Xavier or David Livingstone he was by nature a pioneer. He would build on no other man's foundations. And now that he had completed his work in Asia, and that the East was increasingly full of Christian workers, he felt he had "no more any place in these regions" (Rom. 15:23). The land of the pillars of Hercules, whither no missionary yet had ventured, called to him; and he was eager to undertake the long and hazardous journey from which probably he would never return. Two things remained to be done before he could start:—he must bind the Corinthian church to Christ and himself more firmly by making that oft-postponed visit, and he must go to Jerusalem with those who carried the contribution for the poor among its saints.

1. The Collection for the Poor in Jerusalem.

Years had passed since the heads of the church at Jerusalem urged Barnabas and Paul not to forget their poor. What Barnabas had done about it, we do not know. Paul had done nothing, unless he did take an offering from the church at Corinth when he went up and saluted the parent church on his way to Antioch. But what he saw or was told on that occasion may have revealed to him the importance of collecting a generous gift from all his churches before he went to Spain. He

was roused, we may suppose, not so much by the poverty of these Jewish Christians as by their increasing dislike of their Gentile brethren and disbelief in the genuineness of the fruits of his gospel. Though he had fought a long and painful battle for Christian unity, there was danger that after all the body of Christ would not be one. And the collection seemed a hopeful means of averting such disruption. It would be an indisputable evidence that his churches possessed the spirit of Christ; and it would bind Jew and Gentile together in the blessed fellowship of giving and receiving.

To induce his churches to make this offering was not altogether easy. If the Jews despised the Gentiles, what love had the Gentiles for the Jews? And if the church in Jerusalem could not support its poor, did not the churches in Gentile lands have their own problems of poverty? Enthusiasm over a missionary offering was kindled with difficulty in the first century, even as now. Paul could not impose the collection upon his churches by apostolic command; it would lose its value thus; he could only advise it and urge it, and wait their pleasure (Rom. 15:26). He pointed to the duty of making a contribution as the payment of a debt (Rom. 15:27); to the desirability of it as the development of a Christian grace (II Cor. 8:7); to the blessings that would arise from it in answer to grateful prayers of the recipients (9:12-14); and to the example of Jesus and the unspeakable gift of God (8:9; 9:15). And he did not hesitate to stir up emulation in the matter (9:2). As for the manner in which the offering should be collected, he advised that on the first day of the week each disciple should set aside a sum in proportion to the income of the previous week (I Cor. 16:2). And he arranged that the churches in each province should

select trusted delegates to carry their offerings to Jerusalem (16:3), an arrangement doubtless suggested by the custom of Jewish communities in Gentile lands, who chose such delegates to carry their offerings to the temple. It had two advantages:—no suspicion could arise that the funds would be appropriated by Paul or his agents; and the meeting of this body of Gentile Christians with the Jerusalem church would give each a fuller knowledge and better opinion of the other.

Luke makes only an incidental mention of the collection (Acts 24:17), though he was one of those who went to Jerusalem with it. The silence seems strange until we reflect that his narrative deals with the spread of the gospel rather than with the internal development of the church. However, Luke gives a list of those who went with Paul to Jerusalem (20:4), and evidently they are the churches' delegates. Our knowledge of the offering is gained from Paul's letters. They show that when he had fully determined upon making it, he set about the task with his usual energy. As we have already seen, Titus was sent to inaugurate the collection in Achaia, and later to quicken it again into activity; and someone, perhaps Titus, went to Galatia to do the same, or to find out whether the churches there were following the counsel Paul had given them in his last visit. In Macedonia Paul himself could promote the collection which Timothy and Erastus had proposed when they passed through the province on their way to Corinth. The Macedonian churches, however, were in such deep poverty and so burdened with imperial taxation that he hesitated to ask gifts from them; yet, with a gladness and consecration which touched his heart, they begged a share in this ministry to the saints, and gave according to their power, yes, beyond their power

(II Cor. 8:2-5). Before his visit to Macedonia Paul had been doubtful whether he would go with the others to Jerusalem (I Cor. 16:4); but after it—perhaps because the response was so generous—he was determined to go even at all hazards (Rom. 15:25; Acts 21:10 f.). Evidently as the collection progressed, he became increasingly enthusiastic over it, and impressed with its possible fruits. His latest message to the Corinthians about it (II Cor. 8:1-9:15) rises to an exultant note of praise.

2. The Epistle to the Romans.

Paul spent fully six months in Macedonia. The collection would demand little attention; but this was a farewell visit, and there were plenty of matters to detain him. The churches were having a hard time, and needed his fatherly counsel and cheer. He speaks of their affliction in which he shared,—of fightings without and fears within (II Cor. 8:2; 7:5); but he does not tell us the cause or causes. Were Jewish enemies still stirring up persecutions, as in the beginning? This seems likely; yet Gentile foes might be equally aggressive, or traitors within the church might be causing trouble as at Corinth. Luke states merely that Paul made a tour of the churches, encouraging them with many words (Acts 20:2). But the apostle must also have pushed into new fields; else he could not have reported, "I have fully preached the gospel of Christ even unto Illyricum" (Rom. 15:19). A whole unwritten chapter of missionary experience lies behind that brief statement. After this, say in December 55 A.D., he came down to Corinth. The church welcomed him, and the hospitable house of Gaius, one of his own converts (Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 1:15), became his home. Here

he waited until the collection was completed, and the season of navigation opened for the voyage to Jerusalem. For the first time, perhaps, since he began his missionary life, there was no pressing task upon him. And so he set himself to write a letter upon which, unlike the hurried ones he had dashed off hitherto, he could bestow calm and abundant thought. It is our Epistle to the Romans.

The beginnings of the church at Rome are beyond our ken. The imperial city drew all things good or bad to itself; and Christianity must have reached it at a very early date. "Sojourners from Rome" were among Peter's listeners at Pentecost (Acts 2:10); perhaps they accepted his message, and carried it back to Rome. Nor do we know anything about the condition of the Roman church and its composition—whether mainly Jewish or Gentile—when Paul wrote to it. His epistle is vainly scrutinized for information. Doubtless he knew a good deal about the church, since members from it would often come to Corinth or Ephesus; but he tells us almost nothing. We understand why, when we recognize his reasons for writing the epistle. Despite all his ambitious plans for future work, Paul felt that very possibly the end was close at hand. He had narrowly escaped death in Ephesus (II Cor. 1:8 f.); he had faced it with good courage in Macedonia (Id. 5:6 f.); the Jews now were plotting against him in Corinth (Acts 20:3); and the journey to Jerusalem was into the very stronghold of his foes (Rom. 15:31; Acts 20:22 f.). It might be the will of God that he never should go to Rome and thence to Spain (Rom. 1:10; 15:24). If so, he could not proclaim to the central church of the Gentile world the good news of the efficacy of the work of Christ when faith creates

a vital union with Him,—a message so specially his own that he calls it "my gospel" (2:16; 16:25). And he knew or, at least, all his previous experiences led him to suppose that both his gospel and himself were misrepresented and slandered at Rome as elsewhere. Accordingly he determined to write a letter to the Romans. Its subject-matter would be much the same as of his letter to the Galatians; but he wrote that letter in haste and great anxiety, while now he had an opportunity to write deliberately, calmly and at length. He would make a full and clear statement of the gospel which he proclaimed and which the Judaizers opposed. If he was privileged to preach to the Romans later on, the letter would prepare them to give him an unprejudiced hearing; if he was soon to die, it would be his best legacy to them and to all his churches. The epistle, therefore, did not arise from conditions in the church of Rome, and for that reason contains little about them. Its background is Paul's own experiences past and present,—his conversion, his months in Arabia, his work among the Gentiles, his discussions with the leaders at Jerusalem, his battle with the Judaizers who were still dogging his steps,—in short, all that had gone to reveal to him the meaning and power of faith in Christ. The letter is often treated as an abstract theological essay on justification by faith; in reality it is a deeply emotional and most personal defence of the apostle and his gospel. The problems it discusses reach the very center of Paul's life and labours; the arguments it presents have been forged in the fire of repeated controversies. Written with great care—and doubtless many a prayer—and dealing with a central theme of Christianity, the Epistle to the Romans is the greatest of his letters.

Paul's salutation to the Romans is most elaborate, since they had never met him; it sets forth his claims to be an apostle (1:1-7), and is followed by a careful and conciliatory explanation of his purpose in making the proposed visit (8-15). He so words this as to lead up naturally to a statement of the gospel he preaches and desires to set forth to them, namely, that salvation for all alike comes through faith, and in it is revealed a righteousness of God as faith grows more and more (16-17). This is really the theme of his whole letter. And first he treats its doctrinal side. The lack of righteousness is universal. The Gentiles show it by their blindness to God's revelation of Himself in nature, and by their surrender to idolatry and foulest lusts (1:18-32). The Jews, though they look down upon the Gentiles, and boast in the Law and circumcision, show it equally by their failure to keep the Law, and by the uncircumcision of their hearts (2:1-29). Here Paul waives aside with brief answers the familiar Jewish objections,—Are we not better than Gentiles? Can God break His promises to us? You encourage sin, if you magnify the grace of God to sinners;—these objections will be treated more fully later on (3:1-8). The Scripture, then, is true that affirms, There is none righteous, no, not one (9-20). But, though there is no human righteousness, there is a righteousness of God offered to all, and gained by faith in Jesus Christ, whom God set forth to be a propitiation, that thereby He might Himself be righteous in forgiving sins and make righteous those who have this faith (21-26). And since salvation is of faith and not of merit, the Jewish glorying in the Law is vain, though the Law is not abolished but fulfilled (27-31).

The case of Abraham supports Paul's doctrine,

though his opponents delight to cite it against him. It was Abraham's faith, not his works, that was reckoned for righteousness (4: 1-8); and this was before he was circumcised, i.e., when he still was as the Gentiles; so all the faithful alike may call him father (9-12), and the promise God made to him had no dependence upon keeping the Law (13-17). Indeed, Abraham's faith concerning the birth of Isaac is typical of our faith concerning the resurrection of Christ (18-25). Another proof of the doctrine is personal experience. Justification by faith gives us peace with God and hope of His glory and rejoicing even in tribulations, because we are assured of the love of God revealed in His Son, through whose death we have received reconciliation and in whose life we shall be saved (5: 1-11). Christ's righteousness operates like Adam's sinfulness: as sin with the penalty of death is shared by all who are one with Adam by natural descent, so—though far more abundantly—righteousness with the gift of eternal life is shared by all who are one with Christ by faith (12-19). As for the Law, it came in later to make the grace of God in forgiving sins more evident by revealing the sinfulness of men (20-21).

Thus far Paul has been stating what his gospel is, in order to correct misapprehensions of it. Now he turns to answer familiar objections to it. Paul's opponents honestly believed that to represent righteousness as arising from faith and not from obedience to law,—either the Jewish Law or the law of conscience,—would lead men to indulge in sin without restraint. There is, indeed, this danger, as many a sad page of church history reveals. And Paul has to point out that release from law does not bring liberty for sinning, and that the holiness of him who is joined to Christ by faith

is the real and only holiness. As he has hitherto dealt with the work of faith in justification, so now he deals with the fruit of faith in sanctification. His preceding remark about the grace of God shown in the forgiveness of sins, calls up an objection already noted (3:8), namely, that if the greater our sin, the more God's grace is evident, then we glorify Him by continuing in sin (6:1). Crying out against this as a monstrous assertion, he replies by stating more fully (cf. Gal. 2:20) his conception of the nature of the Christian life. When we become one with Christ by faith, our old self ends, and a new self, not ours but His, begins. The change is not a reformation; it is a death and resurrection, even as Christian baptism signifies. Because Christ lives in us, His death to sin on the cross is ours, and His risen life unto God is ours. Sin, therefore, has no dominion over us (6:1-14). But, says the objector, if there is no law restraining us, we can do what we please (15). Evidently for this objector Paul's previous picture of the life in Christ was too mystical, so he puts it in a simpler form. Without the law you are not freed from restraint; you are bound to righteousness. Once you were slaves of sin whose work is uncleanness and whose wage is death; now you are slaves of God whose work is sanctification and whose free gift—not wage, since no one can earn it—is eternal life in Christ (16-23). Or, to use another illustration, once you were wedded to sin, as a wife to a husband, and brought forth as offspring of that marriage, sin unto death. That union was ended when your old self ceased to exist. Now your new self is wedded to Christ, and its offspring are righteous acts unto God (7:1-6). You regard the Law, then, as an iniquitous device for creating sin? says the objector. Not at all, is the an-

swer; the Law is holy and righteous and good, and its purpose is to make us recognize sin. And then, to illustrate this, Paul gives us two chapters out of his own spiritual history. He pictures how the Law wakened within him an intense consciousness of sin and an ever-deepening recognition of his helplessness, as he agonizingly but vainly struggled to keep it and gain the holiness it set before him. The result was utter despair, i.e., death (7-25). Then came the gift of the new life in Christ. And in glowing words he pictures its freedom from condemnation, its blessed sonship to God, its hope of future glory, and its present help from the Holy Spirit. He ends with a triumphant burst of praise for the certainty that nothing henceforth can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (8: 1-39).

The next section of the epistle is but loosely connected with what precedes or follows it. Jewish Christians were beginning to realize that the blessings of the Messianic kingdom would go to the Gentiles and not to their own people, who were increasingly unresponsive to the gospel. In the bitterness of their regret they accused Paul of deserting his kinsmen,—"a renegade Jew," is the term sometimes applied to him even to-day. This charge he repels, asserting in the strongest terms his love for his nation and his anguish over their present attitude toward Christ (9: 1-5). But how can it be that God's elect people are not to have the kingdom which He had surely promised them from the days of Abraham. Is God faithless? The unbelieving Jews would put this question as an argument against the truth of Paul's teaching; the believers, as a problem which sorely puzzled them. Paul tries to answer each in turn. Suppose, as the Jews assert, that God's promises are absolute. The case of Isaac proves that they

were not given to all of Abraham's seed, and the case of Jacob that they were not given according to merit (6-12). God's mercy is regulated by His own will,—so the Scriptures declare (14-18). And what are men, to criticize that will or comprehend the high purpose of God! (19-29). Such an answer may silence a Jew, but it is not enough for the Christian, who sees in God not an arbitrary Oriental despot but a loving Father, and finds with each of His promises an essential condition. To him Paul says, God has dealt fairly with Israel. They have failed to gain righteousness because they sought it by the Law and not by faith in Christ though that is the ready way and they had abundant knowledge given them (9:30-10:21). But God has not rejected all Israel; as of old, so now, a remnant is saved (11:1-10). And through their loss has come gain to the Gentiles, to whom their fate is a warning (11-24). Moreover, their rejection is only until that time when the Gentiles shall have fully come into the kingdom; then will the Jews too find salvation. Thus wonderful and past human wisdom are the ways of God (25-36).

The doctrinal portion of the epistle is completed; and now Paul, as he is wont, adds a practical portion, urging a life completely dedicated to God (12:1-2). He repeats briefly the advice given the Corinthians about the use of spiritual gifts (3-8), and gives a series of pithy and pregnant precepts about character and conduct (9-21). Good citizenship, involving obedience to rulers and love to the other fellow, is enjoined (13:1-10) with constant mindfulness of the dawning day when Christ shall return (11-14). In the church as in every group of men there are always two parties, the stoics and the epicureans,—those who regard all

pleasure with suspicion, and those who are indulgent towards it; and for the two to understand each other or to live in harmony is difficult. In the Corinthian church the division had shown itself concerning meats offered to idols (I Cor. 8:1 f.); here the broader matter of ascetic and ritualistic observances is the possible source of strife. But the principles to be applied in preserving peace are the same. Avoid censoriousness (14:1-3); recognize the right of personal judgment and accountability to God alone (4-12); and, most important of all, ever show Christian considerateness and helpfulness (13-23). In another matter also,—the relations between Jewish Christians and Gentile,—this same spirit of Christ is the only safeguard against unfortunate dissensions (15:1-13). With some words of explanation about his present occupation and his future plans to visit Jerusalem and Rome, the apostle ends his letter (14-33).

When Paul had spent much time and thought upon an epistle dealing with matters of great importance, we would expect him to send it to more than one church. Probably he did so with the present epistle. The chapter with which it now closes, seems to have been a special note sent with it to Ephesus. And the benediction (15:13) may have been the conclusion of another copy given to the church at Corinth, which would not need the personal explanations that follow. The magnificent doxology (16:25-26) is a fitting close to every copy; for it must have welled from Paul's heart when his great work was completed.

3. The Journey to Jerusalem.

Paul had planned to sail directly from Corinth to Syria, probably aiming to reach Jerusalem in time for

the Passover of 56 A.D. The discovery of a plot laid against him by the Jews,—perhaps to murder him on his ship which would be packed with pilgrims to the feast,—caused him to change his route. He went up into Macedonia, spent the Passover week,—for him the solemn Easter season,—at Philippi, and sailed from there, stopping at various points and reaching Jerusalem before Pentecost (Acts 20:3 f.). Luke joined him at Philippi, and from that point on the narrative in Acts is very full. The details of the voyage are not important; nor are we concerned to determine from the somewhat ambiguous text the course of the delegates before they were all assembled at Troas to accompany Paul with their offerings (20:4-5). But we are greatly interested in the account of the church meeting at Troas on the first day of the week, which would begin by Jewish reckoning on Saturday evening (20:7-12). The gathering at night because the slaves and servants were not free to come by day, the upper room so crowded that even the window-ledge must serve as a seat, the many lights brought by brethren who had to pick their way through dark streets and foul alleys, the earnest farewell speech of Paul, the lad tired from the day's toil and vainly struggling to keep awake, the midnight meal and sacrament, the further talk by Paul with those who could remain until daybreak when he must begin his journey and they, their daily tasks,—it is the clearest picture we possess of a church gathering in apostolic days. But Luke in painting it thought only of the miracle, witnessed by himself, that Paul wrought in restoring Eutychus to life, after the manner of Elijah and Elisha. Had the incident been simply, as some maintain, that Paul discovered signs of life in the

young man when others supposed him dead, Luke would hardly have thought it worth reporting.

Another precious message is the account of Paul's meeting with the Ephesian elders when, not daring to visit Ephesus lest he be detained by friends or foes, he summoned them to Miletus for his farewell. It gives the only example of his speeches to his churches, and none could be more characteristic or touching. We have already noted the light this address throws upon his toils and sufferings at Ephesus; and we must not miss its forecast of the future of that church (20:29 f.). Already Paul perceived the stealthy approach of heresies such as he assailed in his later letters; and he knew the fickleness of the Ephesians (cf. Rev. 2:4). As a matter of fact, though the church was not lost to Christ in after years, it transferred its allegiance from Paul to other leaders (II Tim. 1:15). In the address are found, also, the same forebodings concerning what awaited him in Jerusalem that he had expressed in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 15:31), now intensified by the recent discovery of the plot of the Jews. Over all this journey there lies the shadow of the cross, even as over the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem; and the hazard of the visit is increasingly emphasized as Paul goes forward. At Tyre the disciples warn him to keep away from the hostile city (Acts 21:4); and at Caesarea the prophet Agabus with symbolic act declares that the Jews will bind him and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles (21:11), while both his own companions and the brethren beg him with tears to go no further. But Paul will not be persuaded. The importance of the visit seems to him so great that as its price he is willing not only to be bound but even to die.

Thus "bound in the spirit" (Acts 20:22) Paul

came to Jerusalem. What was his welcome? Luke says, "The brethren received us gladly." How could they do otherwise, when the gifts of the churches were laid before them? Such generous and unexpected relief would fill all hearts with rejoicing. The revelation of their real attitude came the next day when Paul with his Gentile companions appeared before James and the elders to tell them what God had wrought through his ministry. He told in detail the story of his work among the Gentiles; and when they heard it, they glorified God. But immediately they asked, What is to be done about the report that you are no longer living as a Jew, and are teaching the Jews in foreign lands to forsake Moses? The brethren here will hold to the agreement about your Gentile work; but unless they are convinced that this report is untrue, their zeal for the Law will make them turn upon you." This was a poser for Paul, since there was a certain amount of truth in the report. His practice had been to live as a Jew when with Jews and as a Gentile when with Gentiles that he might get into helpful touch with each (I Cor. 9:20 f.); and while he had laid down the rule that a convert should not seek to change from Jew to Gentile or the reverse (Id. 7:18), unquestionably his insistence that Jewish observances are of no avail in gaining righteousness was an encouragement to disregard them. He was not opposed to keeping the Law as a method of life; but he was bound to denounce it as a means of salvation. The Jerusalem church had understood and allowed this attitude to the Law when Peter had stated it at the council; but would they accept it, if Paul should state it now? Unquestionably they had been growing more narrow and Judaistic as the years went by. The departure of such liberal leaders as Barnabas,

Mark, Silas and Peter would hasten the process, if indeed their departure had not been hastened by it. The Judaizers who dogged Paul's footsteps and strove to win away his converts in Galatia and elsewhere, had their headquarters in Jerusalem; and all the brethren there were now, as James declared, "zealous for the Law." Would not any statement by Paul simply stir up trouble? The leaders seem to have felt so, and had planned another way to meet the difficult situation. An act might be more safe and efficacious than words. Just now four impecunious church members were looking for some generous friend to bear for them the heavy expense of sacrifices connected with the fulfilment of vows they had taken. If Paul should make himself that friend, and publicly engage with them in the rites of purification in the temple, then all who saw or heard would be convinced that he still was a loyal son of Israel. To this he made no objections: if they desired it, there was no reason why he should not do it. But as he consented, must he not have felt that the leaders themselves should have defended him against all accusations? Had his generous advances been met with the friendliness and cooperation they deserved? It is hard to believe that either James or the elders had any real sympathy with Paul and his work. We note that when, a few days later, he was in sore trouble through carrying out their suggestion, none of them came forward to bear testimony in his behalf, though it would have helped him much. And as for the majority of the Christians in Jerusalem, we suspect that they were by no means sorry that Paul was in bonds as a malefactor.

XIII

PAUL A PRISONER OF ROME

THE author of Acts devotes nearly one-fourth of his book to the period in Paul's life now before us,—a period of less than five years, during which the apostle was perforce largely inactive, and about whose activities little is told except his speeches of defence. Evidently one purpose of the narrative,—perhaps the main one,—is to show that each Roman official before whom Paul was brought, recognized that the charges against him were false; and this is considered so important as to justify giving much space to it. Christian readers would not need such proof that the apostle did not deserve condemnation; therefore we conclude that Luke had in mind those who were hostile to Christianity, and framed this part of his narrative as a defence of the church in the troubled days when he wrote. It has been argued that the same purpose caused him to close his book without stating that Paul at the end of two years imprisonment in Rome was put to death. But would such silence conceal the fact? And if an opponent of Christianity could point out that the final court of appeal, presumably after a full and fair review of the evidence, put Paul to death, would not Luke's suppression of that fact vitiate his whole document? But if Paul was acquitted, why was not this stated as the crowning event in the series of vindications? Possibly because there were many other things to be stated first, and the papy-

rus roll had reached the limit of convenient size. Possibly because Luke wrote before the final trial was held; in which case his full presentation of the former trials would be with the hope of helping Paul in the present one. Whichever answer we adopt, the abrupt close of Acts throws no light upon the death of the apostle.

1. In Custody of Lysias.

The outer court of the temple at Jerusalem was open to all nationalities; hence its name, the Court of the Gentiles. Next came the court into which only Jews might enter, but women as well as men, and for that reason called the Court of the Women. At each entrance to it stood a notice forbidding any Gentile to enter under penalty of death. In this court was a chamber where those who were ending the Nazarite vow shaved their heads; and doubtless it was here that certain hostile Jews from Asia recognized Paul. They had seen him previously in the city with Trophimus whom they knew to be a Gentile; and they jumped to the conclusion that the four men now with him were Gentiles also whom he had brought into the sacred court. With cries of horror and accusation they roused the worshippers, who dragged Paul out into the Court of the Gentiles where they would have killed him had not Lysias, commander of the Roman cohort which was stationed in the adjoining castle of Antonia for police duty, rushed down with his men and rescued him. As the angry mob still surged and howled around the steps of the castle, Paul asked permission to speak to them. His address is the first of three in his own defence, each framed for a special audience but all setting forth the fact that he is a God-fearing, law-abiding Jew, who acts in obedience to the commands of Jesus of Nazareth

whom he and those of "the Way" accept as Messiah. In the present speech the emphasis is on his religious life. With much tact, e.g., identifying the rage of his foes with his own zeal for God, he describes his persecution of the Christians, his wonderful conversion, his desire to preach in Jerusalem, and the command of Christ which sent him forth to the Gentiles. The mob listened, silent but suspicious, until he was forced to utter the hated word "Gentiles;" whereupon they broke out again into such yells and tumult that Lysias took Paul away into the castle. There he started to examine him under the lash to discover what he had done to arouse such hostility. Paul's statement that he was a Roman citizen promptly stopped this indignity, and secured him henceforth most considerate treatment.

The next day Lysias undertook to find out by the aid of the Sanhedrin what was Paul's offence. The meeting of that body held at his request, was not a formal one—Paul begins his address with the informal "Brethren;" and probably Lysias himself rather than the high-priest presided over it. Indeed, the familiar statement that the high-priest was *ex officio* president of the Sanhedrin is questionable. The Jewish rulers were not expected to try and sentence Paul; the chiliarch could not thus hand over his prisoner, a Roman citizen, to them; but he wished to have Paul repeat the remarkable defence, given the day before, and to learn what they thought of it. They knew about Paul, of course; yesterday's riot, if nothing else, would ensure that; and in their minds he stood already condemned. At his very first words of self-vindication the high-priest, Ananias, called out to those standing near him, "Smite him on the mouth." Fired by this insult Paul denounced the speaker in terms so bold and bitter as

to call forth a horrified remonstrance from the bystanders. But when he learned that it was the high-priest he was condemning, he apologized,—the office, if not the man, should be treated with reverence. Proceeding then in his defence Paul had to tell of the resurrection appearance of Jesus to him. The Sadducees jeered at this, as they always did when belief in a resurrection and angels and spirits was presented, and so irritated the Pharisees by contempt of their favourite doctrine that when Paul promptly appealed to the latter to support his statement as not incredible, they responded. It was an old battle-ground between the two sects; and the fight grew hot, proceeding from words to blows, until Lysias, in fear lest his prisoner might be torn in pieces, carried him off again to the castle. Paul has sometimes been censured as using a cunning device and a distorted fact to save himself by setting his enemies at variance. But the vision of his Lord in the following night showed divine approval of his course; and the words of cheer then spoken were greatly needed. The two days had been full indeed of stress and pain for body and soul.

To Lysias his prisoner must have seemed, in modern phrase, the proverbial match in a powder magazine; and this impression was increased when the next day Paul's nephew came with the statement that a plot to assassinate his uncle had been entered into by more than forty Jews, and that the chief priests and elders were privy to it. This action of the nephew suggests that Paul's family were now reconciled to him; possibly, too, some inheritance or family funds had been received by him, for we have no further indication that he was in extreme poverty but rather the reverse. Lysias recognized the danger of keeping Paul in Jeru-

salem among foes so determined to kill him. He himself would be in a very awkward position if his prisoner, a Roman citizen, suffered harm. So the next night he ordered a large guard to escort Paul to Caesarea where he would be away from the most hostile Jews and directly in custody of the procurator, Felix.

2. In Custody of Felix.

Felix was a freedman; and his exaltation to the high office of procurator was unprecedented. Tacitus says that he wielded the power of a king with the spirit of a slave; and no historian speaks well of him. His harsh treatment of the Jews did much towards rousing them to their final revolt, and brought about his own removal from office. Drusilla, his third wife, was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I and a sister of Herod Agrippa II. Like most of the Herodian women her character was dubious.

Paul's second speech in self-defence was made before Felix when the Jews with a professional accuser came down to Caesarea to lay charges against him. They alleged that he stirred up insurrections, belonged to a forbidden sect, and had profaned the temple. In reply he denied the first charge, asserted that the sect of the Nazarenes was not under the ban, and demanded to be confronted by those who had seen him in the temple. Felix, though ready to please the Jews, did not dare to condemn a Roman citizen on charges so evidently baseless, and postponed his judgment until Lysias should come,—a sheer evasion, as Lysias had already written that the prisoner was innocent. Evidently the Jews perceived that he would proceed no further, and so they left Paul alone. Presently the curiosity of

Drusilla led her to interview Paul; but instead of gaining an interesting account of his wonderful conversion and exciting adventures, she received a rebuke, worthy of John the Baptist, for her desertion of her husband for Felix. Her resentment and the expectation of Felix that Paul or his friends would presently offer a bribe for his release, held the apostle in prison until Felix was recalled to Rome after two years when "desiring to gain favour with the Jews" who were his accusers, he left Paul still in bonds. The captivity was light; his friends could visit him, and doubtless he kept in correspondence with his churches, though none of his letters have been preserved. But the period was mainly one of much needed rest and opportunity for meditation; and his later letters show its effect in their new and fuller conception of Christian truth. The years in the practorium of Caesarea were like the months in the desert of Arabia, a period of spiritual education.

3. In Custody of Festus.

The new procurator, Festus, was honest and well-meaning but unacquainted with Jewish thought and laws. His term of office was brief, perhaps two years, and ended with his death. If we knew the exact date of its beginning, this would help us greatly in the chronology of Paul's life:—58 A.D. is probable but much disputed. When he came to Jerusalem the Jewish authority made an insistent and clamourous demand that Paul be brought up from Caesarea for sentence at Jerusalem, planning, says Luke, to kill him on the way (25:1 f.), and thus forestall his acquittal which they anticipated would come. Festus properly and somewhat disdainfully (25:16) denied this re-

quest, but offered to hear any influential Jews who would go down to Caesarea and testify against Paul. The offer was accepted; and, in the hearing which followed, the old charges were again brought forward and again refuted. Festus realized that the real provocation was Paul's religion; and, knowing little about the sects of the Jews, he was disposed to send the prisoner to the Sanhedrin for trial. But Paul, aware of the malignity of the Jews, stood on his right to be tried in a Roman court and, to ensure this beyond possibility of change, appealed to Caesar. The step was a most decisive one. It took the matter out of the hands of Festus; it transferred the trial to Rome; and, most important of all, it was Paul's final break with his countrymen,—a declaration that he reckoned himself no longer a Jew and subject to the Sanhedrin. Was the appeal a mistake? When Agrippa says, "This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar" (26:32), it seems so. But Paul did not make the appeal impulsively or ignorantly. He had reviewed the whole situation and believed there was no chance of liberty in Palestine. A hearing at Rome he was confident would set him free, and then he would be thus far on his way toward Spain.

Agrippa II was a son of Agrippa I, and a brother of both Drusilla and Bernice. When his father died in 44 A.D., he was thought too young to succeed him; later on he was given the northern part of the paternal kingdom with his capital at Caesarea Philippi. He was also made custodian of the temple at Jerusalem, having power to appoint the high-priest. For a Herod he was a very decent ruler and laboured to preserve peace; but when the Jews finally revolted, he sided with the Romans. Bernice, or Berenice, was in char-

acter like her sister. There were scandals about her relations with her brother, and later on she was the mistress of Titus until he became emperor. When Agrippa came to make a complimentary visit upon the new procurator, Festus took the opportunity to consult him about the puzzling case of the prisoner whom he must send to Rome; and Paul was brought before them to tell his story. His address to the two rulers was not a defence, though he so terms it (26:2), for he was not on trial because he had appealed to Caesar; it was simply a careful, full and eloquent account of his life and faith, inspired by the desire to win them for Christ. Its effect was according to the character of the hearers. Festus, the fair-minded, rationalistic Roman, unfamiliar with the Jewish religion, was impressed with Paul's sincerity, but explained his earnestness as fanaticism, and his remarkable story as the figment of an overtaxed brain. Agrippa, the frivolous, corrupt, renegade Jew, listened with growing uneasiness as his conscience began to stir, and finally turned Paul's personal appeal aside with a jest, "You are going to make me into a Christian in a hurry" (26:28). But both rulers agreed that this man had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

4. In Custody of Julius.

Since Paul had appealed to Caesar, he must be sent to Rome at the earliest opportunity. Julius, the Roman centurion who took him and certain other prisoners in charge for the journey, was a high-minded man and a kindly custodian. We gain a good opinion of centurions from him and the other three mentioned in the New Testament (Luke 7:2; 23:47; Acts 10:1). Luke and Aristarchus, who accompanied Paul, were

probably counted to be his servants; otherwise they would not have been allowed to go with him. A Roman gentleman in Paul's situation would be permitted to have attendants. He seems to have been in ill health at this time (Acts 27:3), and Luke would be his physician, while Aristarchus, a Macedonian Jew who had travelled much with Paul before this (Acts 19:29; 20:4) and who shared his Roman imprisonment later (Col. 4:10), would be nominally his valet.

Luke's log of the voyage, like that of the preceding one, is very full. He was a Greek and, therefore, fond of the sea. It has been pronounced "the most important document antiquity has left for an understanding of the mode of working an ancient ship;" and it ends with a thrilling picture of one of Paul's "perils in the sea,"—not as thrilling, however, as might be that of one of his earlier and unrecorded shipwrecks when for a night and a day he was in the deep (II Cor. 11:25). In the whole account what interests us most is what Luke seems to have taken for granted,—the way in which Paul speedily becomes the leading person on the ship. Before they have finished their disastrous voyage, the centurion, the master of the vessel, the soldiers and the sailors have learned to look to him for counsel, command and cheer. The little, unprepossessing Jewish prisoner is recognized to be greater than all his companions. It is the power of a strong and Christian personality.

The enforced stay of three winter months at Malta, until navigation opened in the spring of 59 A.D., must have been spent by Paul in evangelism; though Luke tells only of works of healing. He calls the people of Malta barbarians because they were not Greeks (cf. Rom. 1:14); but we are not to think of them as sav-

ages. Their culture was Phoenician, and Publius was the official head of the island. From Malta to Puteoli, a great commercial port, the voyage was uneventful; and from that city, as was customary, the remaining journey of one hundred and seventy miles was made by land. The sojourn for a week with brethren at Puteoli refreshed Paul's spirit; and the welcome of other brethren from Rome who came to meet him as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns, stations on the Appian Way forty-three and thirty miles south of the city, made him thank God and take courage.

5. In Custody of Nero.

"And so we came to Rome," says Luke,—not at all as Paul had thought to come when he wrote to the Romans, or even when he appealed to Caesar. He was a prisoner, and the prospect of speedy release had vanished. The report of Festus concerning him had doubtless been lost in the shipwreck, and a copy of it must be secured from Caesarea before anything else. That would take time. Then a person must be appointed as Nero's representative to look into the case; and he would probably suit his own convenience about doing it. Then, if it was decided that the report of Festus did not justify a release, there must be a trial; and for this the Jewish accusers must be summoned from Jerusalem. Another long wait. Years might go by before the matter was ended. So Paul settled down to use the time as profitably as possible. His imprisonment was light; the verbal report of Lysias ensured that. He was allowed to occupy hired lodgings; and though the soldier who guarded him was linked to him by a light chain at times (Acts 28:20; Eph. 6:20),

we can hardly believe that he was always treated thus as a criminal. The guards, when they grew to know him, would certainly love him and possibly his Lord, and would grant him every permissible liberty. His friends could gather in his room to hear him preach the kingdom of God and teach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and perhaps he might with his guard attend other Christian meetings (Acts 28:30 f.). His relations with the Roman Jews are puzzling. Three days after his arrival, he invited their leaders to meet him, and explained his situation (28:17 f.). Why should he do this? And they declared that they had heard no charge against him, and knew little about his sect except that it was everywhere denounced. Was this ignorance feigned? If, as is generally thought, the strife that led Claudius at one time to expel all Jews from Rome (18:2) was between those who were Christians and those who were not, these men must have known about Christianity and doubtless had heard about Paul. The meeting held with them a little later (28:23 f.) is evidently a substitute for the usual initial work in the synagogue with which Paul was accustomed to begin his labours in a new city, and it had the usual results. But why should Paul or Luke apply this formula of work to Rome?

Luke sums up in a single paragraph two years of Paul's life in Rome (28:30-31). It is his practice to give such a summary of a period as the close of one section of his history before beginning another section with a fuller account of it, e.g., he closes his gospel with a brief statement of the ascension, and begins Acts with further details of what happened during the Forty Days (cf. 2:47; 11:26). Had he written his third book, he would have told us about those two

years. But now all we know is the few facts we can glean from the letters Paul wrote in his Roman prison. Paul's old friends in the East visited him frequently. It was easy for them to come to Rome; for, as Ramsay says, "travelling was more highly developed, and the dividing power of distance was weaker, under the Empire than at any time before or since until we come down to the present century." Besides Luke and Aristarchus who came with him, we find Paul companioned by Tychicus, Mark, Timothy, and certain others whose names are not mentioned in Acts. Through these he kept in touch with his absent churches; they brought him tidings and carried back messages and letters. The inactivity that characterized the Caesarean imprisonment does not continue into the Roman; Paul is in bonds but the word of God is not bound, and he is still the Lord's ambassador. His relations with the Christians of Rome are not clear. They met him with a welcome; but his letter to the Philippians implies that he is lonely and in want, and states that some who were preaching Christ did it of envy and strife. Evidently the church was divided about him, and apparently he received little attention from it.

XIV

THE LETTERS OF PAUL IN PRISON

BESIDES the letters we have already considered, the New Testament contains seven others usually ascribed to Paul. Of these the three to Timothy and Titus form a distinct group which must be treated by itself. The other four expressly state that they were written by Paul in bonds (Phile. 1; Col. 4:3; Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:13); but from what prison? From Caesarea, say a few scholars; from Rome, say many and the early traditions. The situation described in them, especially in Philippians, suits Rome better than Caesarea; and their difference in thought and tone from the earlier epistles would seem to indicate that they were not written in the first years of imprisonment. They dwell on deeper and more speculative truths; they glorify the person rather than the work of Christ; they no longer put the coming of the Lord in the foreground; and they sound a conservative note,—hold fast to the old, true doctrine. They are distinguished by "a more uniform tenderness, a richer fragrance of devotion, and a quiet insight that reaches to the depths of the things of life and of God," and "are well styled the afternoon epistles, as the writings of the Judaic controversy are the noonday epistles, of Paul" (Findlay). There has been a change in the thought of the writer, partly through prolonged meditation during the years at Caesarea, partly through the influence of the imperial city upon his con-

ception of Christ and the church. There has been a change, also, in the churches to which he writes. The old battle against Judaizers is almost ended, and with it the need of asserting the apostolic authority of Paul. But new and subtler foes have appeared, and the gospel must be put into a new form to meet them. Moreover, the Christians to whom he writes are no longer babes in Christ; and he can give them instruction suited to their maturer stage.

1. The Letter to Philemon.

Onesimus was a thieving slave who had run away from his Christian master, Philemon, in Colosse and gone to Rome,—the refuge of scapegraces. Here in some way he met Paul, and was converted to Christ; and the duty was laid upon him to return to his master. It was not an easy thing to do, because Philemon had been deeply wronged and might punish him cruelly:—angry masters often put their slaves to death. Paul never had been in Colosse; but he knew Philemon, indeed seems to have been his father in Christ; so he wrote a note for Onesimus to carry back, which should gain him kindly treatment. It is the only one preserved, except the last chapter of Romans, of the many notes Paul must have written; and it makes us wish that we had more. Nothing could be more skilful than the way in which he deals with the injured and irate slave-master, urging him in a most courteous yet compelling way to forgive Onesimus and set him free. It is the glove of velvet and the grip of steel.

Philemon is praised for his love to all saints, which would, of course, now include Onesimus (4-7). Paul is going to ask as a favour to himself in his old age and imprisonment something which he might impose as a

command (8-9). The favour is really for Onesimus (and here the first mentioned of the hated name is softened by a pun) whom Paul sends back, though he would like to keep him as a loan from Philemon (10-14). Perhaps the reason why he "was parted for a season," was that Philemon should receive him as a brother dear to Paul and still more to himself (15-16). Now comes, not a request but a direct command to receive him or else forfeit Paul's fellowship (17); but it is softened by an offer to repay whatever he has stolen, though Philemon is reminded how he himself owes Paul a debt that money cannot pay (18-20). An earnest appeal to rejoice Paul's heart by granting the request or doing even more, i.e., by setting Onesimus free (20-21), is made more effective by the statement that Paul hopes presently to visit Philemon, when of course, he will know what treatment the slave has received (22). And the closing salutations from Paul's companions are an unspoken declaration that they, too, are deeply interested in the welfare of Onesimus. Is there any doubt that Philemon surrendered to such an appeal? How could he withstand its courteous yet compelling words?

This little note brings before us one of the many problems presented to Christianity by slavery. Why does not Paul say frankly that slavery is contrary to the law of Christ, and insist that every Christian slaveholder should set his slaves free? Think what the effect would have been in all the later ages of slaveholding, if there had been a square, apostolic command against it. But would that command ever have reached later ages? Remember that a majority of the population in the Roman empire, or at least in Italy, were slaves; that they had practically no protection from the

passions of cruel or licentious masters; that often they were of the same race as their owners; and that some were highly educated. Evidently there was constant reason to fear a servile insurrection which might destroy the whole existing civilization. Italy had already with difficulty crushed out one such insurrection, and was ever on guard against another. For Paul to denounce slavery would be to hurl a firebrand, and might not only cost him his life but lead to the extermination of Christianity. All he could do was to preach the gospel of a common brotherhood in Christ Jesus; and this, when fully grasped—how slowly men have grasped it!—would make slavery impossible. Philemon cannot receive Onesimus as "a brother beloved," and treat him as a chattel. To the Christian slaves, who formed perhaps the majority of the church, Paul could only preach patience:—they must abide in their condition, comforting themselves with the knowledge that they were the Lord's freedmen (I Cor. 7:21). But even thus there were difficulties. If the slave and his master met as equals in the church, there was danger that in the household due subordination and obedience might be refused. Against this Paul warns them (I Tim. 6:1-2). And if the master was surly and failed to give his slave fair treatment, the Christian emphasis of justice and kindness might increase the natural resentment of the sufferer. This calls forth the injunctions to household servants in I Peter 2:18-25. But what about a Christian slave with a heathen master? Occasions must constantly have arisen when he would be ordered to take part in idol worship or assist in heathen practices; could he obey his master and yet be true to his Lord? No answer is given to this question; yet evidently the old

problem of Naaman in the house of Rimmon (II Kings 5:18) could not be evaded. And how should a Christian master deal with the heathen practices of slaves who were not Christian? Should he forbid them or ignore them? To this, again, we have no answer. Slavery and Christianity could at the best be but unequally yoked together, and their joint progress was a tortuous one.

2. The Letter to the Colossians.

Colosse was a city in the valley of the Maeander, four or five days distant from Ephesus. Paul had never visited it (Col. 2:1), though some of its citizens must have met him in their frequent visits to Ephesus, its metropolis. There was a church there, of which Epaphras was a member, perhaps the founder (Col. 1:7); and it met in the house of Philemon, who was one of Paul's converts (Phile. 2, 19). Epaphras had come to Rome and told Paul about a heresy that was gaining acceptance. There is much discussion as to its exact nature; but it seems to have been some form of what was later known as gnosticism, together with a mixture of Jewish ideas such, possibly, as were held by that strange Jewish sect, the Essenes. Thoughtful men have always pondered over two problems, How could a purely spiritual God create a universe of matter? and, How could a supremely good God create or permit evil? These are problems both of philosophy and of religion, and usually go together. The old religions of the East, out of which gnosticism came, adopted one of two answers. Zoroastrianism said, Matter and evil are as eternal as God and good; from the beginning there have been two realms confronting each other and in constant warfare,—the realm of

spirit, light and good, and the realm of matter, darkness and evil, each with a supreme leader. Brahmanism said, Matter and evil have no real existence; they are simply illusions of the mind from which perfect knowledge frees us. Gnosticism, which took its name from its profession to know these mysteries, leaned sometimes to the one answer and sometimes to the other. It framed many systems, but always taught that matter and evil are connected, and that God has nothing to do directly with either,—He dwells far apart from the sinful world. To bridge the wide abyss between God and man, a series of intermediate agents was imagined. From God, in whom is all "fulness," emanates a being less spiritual, holy and powerful than Himself; and from this emanation another still less so, until the last one in the series is so reduced in divine qualities as to be able to come in contact with the world of sin and matter. Whether the world was created by this last emanation or by an evil spirit, would be answered according as the gnostic system inclined to illusion or to dualism. Gnosticism, if it recognized Christianity, would hold that Christ was one of these emanations, a spiritual being who either merely seemed to have a material body or else joined Himself to the man Jesus at the baptism and left him again at Calvary. His work would be to redeem men from the bondage of sinful matter by teaching the nature of sin and matter to a select few who in turn would teach others able to receive such knowledge. If the gnostic scheme held that matter and evil are illusions, then a holy life would be consistent with the grossest sensuality and self-indulgence; if the opposite scheme obtained, then holiness would involve severest asceticism and separation from the world. Simon Magus was

claimed by some of the later gnostics as one of their number; writings professedly by him are quoted, and many of their doctrines ascribed to him.

The gnostic type of thought was congenial to the people of Asia Minor, especially of ancient Phrygia in which Colosse stood. "Cosmological speculations, mystic theosophy, religious fanaticism, all had their home there" (Lightfoot). Paul's note to Ephesus (Rom. 16:17-20) and still more clearly his address at Miletus (Acts 20:29-30) show that he was apprehensive of some such heresy. The exact form which this teaching had taken at Colosse we can only infer from the letter he wrote the Colossians and sent to them by Tychicus who was going to Asia with Onesimus (Col. 4:7-9). Probably the statement of it which Epaphras gave him was very incomplete, and much of what he wrote was in refutation of what he feared might be taught. What he specially strives to impress upon his readers is the completeness of the gospel they have already received, so that no professedly supplementary or improved teachings shall be added to it, and the sufficiency of Christ in all things, doing away with all need of the gnostic mediators and spiritual rulers. "Christ is all and in all: in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full" (3:11; 2:9-10).

After a salutation in which Timothy—who had probably visited Colosse (cf. Philc. 1)—is joined (1:1-2), and a thanksgiving for the present condition of the church (3-8), followed by an avowal of his prayers for its future progress (9-14), Paul passes without a break to set forth the Christian doctrines that are contrary to the heresy. First is the paramountcy of Christ, as opposed to the gnostic doctrine that He is

but one in a graded realm of higher beings (15-19). In relation to God, Christ is His image (15a); in relation to the universe, including all the gnostic higher beings (if, indeed, they exist), He is its source and reason of existence (15b-17); in relation to the church, He is its head and beginning (18). Thus all "the fulness" (probably a favourite term of the gnostics) is in Him (19). Next is the sole activity of Christ in the work of reconciliation, by way of contrast to the gnostic schemes of mediation and redemption (1:20-2:7). Wherever, on earth or elsewhere, there is reconciliation, He is its agent (20). And in particular the Colossians have been reconciled solely through faith in Him (22-23) because whatever Paul himself had gladly suffered for them or taught to them was really by Christ in him (24-29), and the great aim of it all was that they might know Christ in whom is all wisdom and knowledge, and might live accordingly (2:1-7).

The way has now been prepared for a direct injunction against any teacher who puts Christ aside. Ambitious as may be his "philosophy," it is really childish prattle (2:8). All that he offers for spiritual needs is found in Christ,—fulness, true circumcision, spiritual life, forgiveness and dominion (9-15). As for his rules concerning foods and sacred days, they are worthless,—a shadow instead of the reality in Christ (16-17); and the whole gnostic scheme debars from Christ and His reward (18-19). Asceticism is not spiritual, and has no real force in fighting fleshly lusts (20-23). The life hid with Christ in God, and the mind set upon the things of Christ, are the true means of holiness (3:1-4). The old foul life is to be put away, not by denial but by death of self; and the

new life in Christ must be kept free from every form of sin by all alike, no matter what the former race, religion, culture or condition,—these disappear when Christ is all and in all (5-11). In place of ascetic ordinances Paul gives a series of Christian rules for individual life (12-17), for family life,—the case of Onesimus causing special stress to be laid on servants and masters (3: 18-4: 1), and for prayer and social life (2-6). Those who wish to learn about his own affairs are referred to Tychicus and Onesimus (7-9), and the epistle closes with a series of salutations from the group of friends and fellow-workers who are gathered around Paul in his prison (10-18).

This, then, is Paul's answer to the gnostics. The mystery of Christ, now clearly revealed and openly proclaimed to every man (1: 23-28), is incomparably better than the esoteric mysteries, a knowledge of which fills the favoured few with conceit and is supposed to make them perfect. The fulness of Christ as regards both creation and redemption does away with all need of a host of intermediaries between God and the world or man. The life in Christ gives a victory over sensuality and sin, impossible to be gained by asceticism or ritual. And the deepest problems of philosophy are solved when Christ is recognized; since all the seeming discord of the universe finds harmony in Him, and the process of the ages is the onward march of His Kingdom. "In Him" is the keyword of the epistle, repeated again and again like the thematic phrase of a symphony.

3. The Letter to the Ephesians.

In his letter to the Colossians (4: 16) Paul bids them get a letter from the neighbouring city of Laod-

icea and read it. What was that letter? Marcion, an early writer, calls our Epistle to the Ephesians the Epistle to the Laodiceans. Probably it was written to them, though not to them alone. The only indication of its destination is the words "at Ephesus" of the opening verse; and two of the oldest and best manuscripts have a blank instead of these words, as if the destination were to be filled in later. These facts and the character of the letter lead to the conclusion that Ephesians was written to the group of churches headed by Ephesus, and the bearer was to insert the name of each particular church to which he gave a copy of it. What called it forth can easily be conjectured. The report that heresy had appeared at Colosse would make Paul anxious about his other Asian churches:—were they, too, infected with this subtle and seductive false doctrine? Possibly Epaphras had brought some word about their condition; for he would sail for Rome from Ephesus, and would know about that church and its neighbours. And certainly Paul would leave nothing undone that might safeguard his beloved converts. We may suppose, therefore, that after finishing his letter to the Colossians, he wrote a general letter to the other churches, and gave Tychicus copies of it to distribute as he journeyed to Colosse with Onesimus. This second letter in many ways resembles Colossians but by no means merely reproduces it. The doctrinal part is not so directly aimed against the heresy, since Paul knows less the form it takes in these churches and the extent to which it has spread. What he aims to do is to set forth certain great truths that may counteract it. "Ephesians has a broader point of view than Colossians. The Colossian perversion of the gospel serves in Ephesians only as a point of departure for a

general warning against any teaching which does not recognize the supreme majesty of Christ. Controversies and false doctrines are almost forgotten as Paul unfolds the eternal plan of God through all the ages to consummate all things in Christ" (B. W. Robinson). The practical commands are against licentiousness rather than asceticism; because the more seductive and prevalent form of the gnostic heresy would be that which granted full license to indulgence of fleshly appetites as being mere illusion.

Ephesians opens with praise to God for all the blessings He has granted the writer and the readers. The list of what God has freely bestowed is a long and wonderful one; and the fact that they are all in Christ is emphasized again and again (1: 3-14). This is followed by the prayer that God would give the readers a knowledge of Himself, both as to the hope of His calling and the glorious riches of His inheritance and the greatness of His power shown already in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ who is head over all things to the church, His body (15-23). The statement of what they and Paul himself once were—dead in sins and children of wrath by nature (2: 1-3), is left a broken sentence as the apostle hastens to celebrate the love of God, through which they now share Christ's life and enthronement in "the heavenlies" in order that the exceeding riches of His grace may be manifest in the ages to come (4-10). Since the church is a body of which Christ is the head, or a temple of which He is the chief corner-stone, the Jews and Gentiles who belong to it are no longer separated and at strife; peace and union have taken the place of enmity and division (11-22). Paul's part in this dispensation of grace has been to receive with others a revelation

of the mystery of the fellowship of the Gentiles, to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make manifest to all men that which interests even heavenly beholders,—the manifold wisdom of God shown in His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus (3: 1-13). With a second prayer, brief but most comprehensive, for the readers, and a doxology (14-21), the doctrinal part of the letter closes.

The practical teachings begin with an exhortation to live worthily of the Christian calling, exerting themselves to keep the unity of the Spirit (4: 1-3). There must be such unity, for the church is one in all the great fundamentals (4-6); and the different offices and gifts of its members are for the perfecting of the saints and the building up of the one body of Christ until it shall attain the measure of a full-grown man and express the fulness of Him who is its Head (7-16). The old man, the Gentile darkness and lust, must be put off, and the new man created by God in righteousness and truth, must be put on (17-24). The sins to be cast off, and the mode of life by which God in Christ is to be imitated, are set forth in some detail (4: 25-5: 2) with a special warning against impurity and against any teacher who might represent such things of shame and darkness to be of no moral quality (5: 3-14). A Christian must live with true wisdom, sober enthusiasm and proper subordination (15-21). In accepting this subordination wives are to be in subjection to their husbands, yet the husband is to love his wife even as himself, Christ's love for the church being the example (22-33); children are to obey their parents, yet parents are not to provoke but to nurture them (6: 1-4); and slaves are to render service to their masters as unto Christ, while the master likewise is to

bear Christ in mind in all his treatment of them (5-9). Finally, all are to arm themselves with the panoply of God for the fight against the spiritual forces of wickedness (10-17), remembering to pray for all saints including Paul himself who for the gospel is an ambassador in a chain (18-20). Tychicus is sent to tell them how the apostle fares and to strengthen their hearts (21-22). Peace and grace be with all the brethren (23-24).

The authenticity of both Colossians and Ephesians has been disputed, because they differ so much from Paul's earlier epistles; but the difference is easily explained by the natural changes in the writer, the churches and the foes that assailed them as the years went by. Other critics, accepting Colossians as genuine, reject Ephesians because of its unlikeness to its companion; but had the two epistles been strongly alike, would not that fact have been used as a proof that Ephesians is merely an imitation of Colossians by some forger?

4. The Letter to the Philippians.

The three letters we have just considered were sent at the same time. Was the letter to the Philippians an earlier or a later production? Scholars do not agree, but a later date seems probable. The long stay in hired lodgings at Rome would deplete Paul's funds; the Philippians feared this, and sent a supply by Epaphroditus (Phil. 4:18). He found that all of Paul's old companions except Timothy were away (2:19 f.); so he remained to render service, and presently he fell gravely ill. His friends in Philippi learned of his illness, and were much distressed; and he in turn was sorely troubled when the news of their distress reached

him (2:25-30). All this would take time. Moreover, the letter indicates, as the others did not, that Paul's case had already been given a hearing, especially if we understand with Ramsay "the Praetorium" (1:13) to be the court which would try him. When he wrote he was waiting to see what the verdict would be (2:23). He had hoped for a prompt release as soon as he could gain a hearing; and this unexpected and discouraging delay fills him with grave apprehensions. He faces the possibility of death instead of liberty; and though he has by no means lost hope, he is ready to accept with joy whichever issue God may give, and would have his friends do the same (1:21 f.; 2:17; 4:4). He rejoices already in the assurance that the course of the trial thus far,—"the things that have happened unto me" (1:12)—has helped spread the gospel. In making his defence he has had an opportunity to proclaim himself as Christ's prisoner before the whole court; and his courage as a preacher in bonds has made others more bold to preach,—some, indeed, with aspersions of Paul, but all preaching Christ (1:13-18). And his trust is that with all boldness, as always so now also, Christ shall be magnified in his person whether by life or by death (1:20).

The opportunity to send the Philippians a letter came with the return of Epaphroditus home. He could do little for the apostle now that the trial had brought close confinement, and he longed after those who were troubled about him. Probably Paul had already sent his thanks for the gift (Polycarp speaks of the letters of Paul to the Philippians), but he would again express his pleasure and gratitude. His main purpose in writing, however, is to bid them to rejoice over the tidings Epaphroditus would bring, grave

though they might seem to be. He would have them know that his own heart is strong and joyful, and theirs should be the same. Conscious that this may be his last message to a church with whom his relations have ever been most intimate and affectionate, he takes the opportunity to rebuke a spirit of self-assertion that is causing dissension (1:27; 2:1-10; 4:2), and to warn them against certain Judaizers and sensualists (3:1-4:1). The letter is the most tender and touching of all that we have of his; and Lightfoot well pronounces it "the noblest reflection of Saint Paul's personal character and spiritual illumination, his large sympathies, his womanly tenderness, his delicate courtesy."

Philippians is as impossible of analysis as a love-letter. The noblest passage in it (2:1-10) has been grievously abused by being considered a dry, precise statement of the doctrine of the incarnation with each word weighed and safeguarded as in the clauses of a creed; whereas it really is a wonderful picture of the mind of Christ, painted with a few bold strokes and held before those who are minded to faction and vain glory. Another graphic picture, which he paints to warn them against the wiles of the Judaizers, is the contrast between his own old, proud, self-righteous Pharisaic life, magnificent but worthless, and his present humble, self-forgetful, earnest endeavour to gain Christ and the righteousness that is through faith in Him (3:2-15).

XV

THE PASSING OF PAUL

WE come now to the most uncertain and disputed portion of Paul's history. The closing statement of Acts warrants the conclusion that his imprisonment ended after two years (61 A.D.); but did it end in death or in release? And if he was set at liberty, did he go to Spain, as he had so long planned, or back to his churches in the East, as his prison letters promise? And when and where and how did he depart to be with Christ? Luke never wrote his third book; so contemporary history is silent about Paul's passing. But an almost contemporary writer was Clement of Rome; and he says of Paul that "having taught righteousness to the whole world, and having come to the limit of the West, and having borne testimony before the rulers, he departed thus from the world." This seems to be a trustworthy statement that Paul did go to Spain, which could not have been unless he was released. To be sure, some scholars understand "the limit of the West" to mean Rome; but Clement could hardly use such a phrase to describe Rome when he was writing in that city. Statements by second century writers that Paul went to Spain are of less value because they may have been based wholly upon his expressed intention of going there. The probability that he would be released, and also the expectation of release revealed in his letter to the Philippians, are magnified by those who affirm the release and minimized by those who deny it. Paul certainly

expected release when he made his appeal to Caesar; and nothing that we know of changed the situation later. The charges against him were Jewish, not of importance in Rome, and he had the advantage of being a Roman citizen. However, the whole question of his release would be one of mere curiosity, hardly worth discussion, were not the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles involved. Their claim to be by Paul can hardly be defended, as we shall see, unless his release from the Roman imprisonment is granted. At the same time we must recognize that their authenticity is not established, if his release is accepted as a fact. Some other Christian writer may have felt that their messages were what Paul would have sanctioned, and in later days have put them forth in Paul's name. Such assignment of a writing to an earlier author was not unusual, and was not considered dishonest.

1. The Problems of the Pastorals.

The letters to Timothy and Titus are known as the Pastoral Epistles because they were addressed to men in charge of churches, and contain instructions suited to pastoral work. The three letters form a group by themselves, and in many ways are so distinct from the Pauline epistles already considered that their authorship by Paul has been greatly doubted or strongly denied. The external evidence for it, i.e., the indications that very early writers regarded the letters as genuine, is nearly as strong as for the undisputed letters. To be sure, Marcion, about the middle of the second century, omitted the Pastoral Epistles from his list of Paul's epistles; but he dealt with all the New Testament writings to suit his heretical views. The internal evidence, i.e., what is found in the epistles themselves,

is confusing and conflicting. Though they claim to be by Paul, and contain much that seems Pauline, they have also much that is unlike what we find in the undisputed letters of Paul, and they reveal conditions in the church too far advanced apparently for the days of Paul. Volumes have been written for and against their authorship; and the discussion still goes on. The four leading opinions and the main arguments concerning each, may be briefly summed up as follows:

1. The epistles are wholly spurious, and much later than the time of Paul. Several proofs of this are brought forward. (*a.*) In vocabulary and style they are unPauline:—we miss the nervous force, the compact thought, the rush of argument and impetuous digressions, that characterize Paul's writings. New words, peculiar phrasing, feebleness of expression, lack of logic betray another author. In reply to this it is asked, Must a letter-writer have the same style and words at all times and in all correspondence? May not mood and circumstance and subject-matter and recipient cause marked changes? (*b.*) The tone of the letters is not what Paul would use when addressing his most intimate and long-time fellow-workers. Note how unsuitable are the emphasis of his apostleship and authority, the information about his past career, and the solemn repetition of simple truths and obvious warnings. But are not just these features a characteristic of old age? Or, if it be thought that Paul could not have aged so greatly since he wrote the Roman prison letters, may he not have expected that these pastoral letters would be laid before the church, and therefore have shaped their contents for the flock more than for the shepherd? (*c.*) The great Pauline ideas are largely lacking:—"faith" has lost its special

meaning, so emphasized in other epistles, and become simply one of the Christian virtues; godliness and good works rather than union with Christ, are made the center of a Christian life. But the letters are not polemic discussions nor doctrinal treatises; they are practical instructions in Christian living; and only the religious ideas that suit this purpose would be chosen and emphasized. And is it not true that the farther one advances in years, the more a quiet walk with God in the way of His commandments seems the one thing to be recommended as worth while? (*d.*) The letters reveal a development of ecclesiastical organization and of gnosticism which was not reached until after the days of Paul. But can this assertion be substantiated? We really know very little about the church life or the heresies in the middle of the first century; and certainly we must not put the same fulness of meaning into the terms used in these epistles that we would, if they were in writings of the second century. Dr. Lindsay, speaking out of his own experience as a missionary in India, says, "The more I study these Pastoral Epistles, the more evident it becomes to me that they are just what every experienced missionary has to impart to a younger and less experienced colleague when he warns him about the difficulties he must face and the tasks, often unexpected, he will find confronting him. It is scarcely to be wondered at, then, that the Pastoral Epistles are always among the earliest portions of the Scriptures translated in almost every mission station. * * * The very errors [gnostic] denounced by the Pastoral Epistles may be found among Hindu enquirers who never get further than enquiring and a certain measured sympathy with Christian teachings."

2. The Pastoral Epistles are not by Paul, but the

unknown author incorporated in them certain brief notes by him. For example, Dr. McGiffert thinks that Titus, though largely not Pauline, is based on a note written by Paul just before his last visit to Corinth; that II Timothy contains with many additions a farewell letter from Paul at Rome shortly before his death at the end of the first imprisonment, and also a brief note (about the cloak, etc., 4:9, 11b-15, 20-21a), written from Macedonia soon after Paul was forced to leave Ephesus (Acts 20:1); and that I Timothy has at the utmost only small fragments of Pauline letters. The objection to this or any other composite theory is that there is nothing to indicate such a mixture of material; the unknown author and compiler, if such there was, must have been skilful beyond degree in making his production an harmonious whole in style and thought. Moreover, most of the arguments used to prove that Paul did not write certain parts of the epistles are equally valid against the supposition that he wrote any part of them and cannot be used against a portion without invalidating the whole.

3. The letters are by Paul, but were written before the end of the first imprisonment, which terminated in death. Bartlett, for example, holds that I Timothy was written soon after Paul parted with the elders at Miletus (Acts 20:38) to Timothy who had been left behind to look after the church at Ephesus; that Titus was written from Rome, the recipient having been left at Crete when Paul went to Rome; and that II Timothy is a farewell letter to Timothy at Ephesus just before the apostle's death. To support this theory he has to suppose that II Timothy 4:20 has somehow strayed from I Timothy where it belongs, and that II Timothy 4:9-13, 21a is a separate letter, written earlier than

Philippians, to summon Timothy to Rome. Any such theory has great difficulty in fitting the facts mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles into what we know of the apostle's life; and it makes the Pastoral Epistles no longer a distinct group in time, but alternates their composition with that of Romans and the Epistles of the Captivity. Most scholars agree that if the Pastoral Epistles are by Paul, they must have been written after he was set free at Rome, since no previous situation meets their requirements.

4. The letters are genuine and were written after Paul's release from imprisonment. They were accepted and treasured as such almost without question in the early centuries; and none of the arguments brought against them is sufficient to prove them forgeries. We shall treat them as genuine, recognizing, however, that the problems they present are only partially solved, and that their Pauline authorship is by no means as unmistakable as that of the other epistles credited to him. However, authorship has little to do with their right to a place in the New Testament. Even if they are by an unknown writer, so is Hebrews. The church has tested them by its own spiritual sense, and found them truly "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16); and this apart from the question whether Paul was their author. But if they are by Paul, they throw some light upon his last years and his death; and thus are doubly precious to those who love the great apostle to the Gentiles.

2. The First Letter to Timothy.

If we suppose that Paul was set at liberty and that he wrote the Pastoral Epistles, can we trace his move-

ments, or decide when and where he wrote them? It is an almost hopeless task, since the only data are a few incidental statements in these letters. Without the Book of Acts how much could we discover of Paul's earlier labours from his epistles? All we can do is to sketch a possible history. From his expressed intention to visit Colosse and Philippi as soon as he was released (Phile. 22; Phil. 2:24), we may infer that his first journey was among his beloved churches in the East. If the churches in Crete were a fruit of his own labours, as his well-known rule of not working in other men's fields would lead us to suppose, he may next have spent some time evangelizing that island whose shores had appealed to him when he sailed so close to them on his way to Rome. Next, we may place the final execution of his long-cherished plan to visit Spain. Returning, after we cannot say how long a stay, he revisits Crete and leaves Titus there to rectify certain conditions and complete the organization of the churches (Titus 1:5). He goes onward to Ephesus where he finds conditions bad, and has to excommunicate Hymenaeus and Alexander as heretics (I Tim. 1:20). Leaving Timothy to continue this needed work of repressing heresy, he passes into Macedonia (I Tim. 1:3), and from there he would naturally go down to Achaia. Corinth would be the place where most readily he could hear directly or indirectly from Timothy. Evidently the young man was having a hard time. He had previously been associated with Paul as with a father (Phil. 2:22), and the dominant spirit of the apostle would hinder the development of a self-reliant character. He seems to have been of a gentle, pacific and somewhat timorous nature (I Cor. 16:10; II Tim. 1:4), and not strong physically (I Tim. 5:23). Left alone to handle a very difficult

position, it is not strange that he felt like deserting it and needed a letter of strong encouragement from Paul.

Since Ephesus was the metropolitan city, the other churches of Asia looked to its church for guidance and assistance; and Timothy, as the apostle's delegate, would be in apostolic charge of their management, involving the superintendence of men much older than himself in years though not in Christian life. And in all matters of doctrine it would be his duty to guard the true and oppose the false. The heresy for which Hymenaeus and Alexander were excommunicated, seems to have been similar to that which had appeared earlier in Colosse, but with more of a gnostic element. We find the "knowledge, which is falsely so called" (6:20), the "profane and old wives' fables" (4:7), which are the marvellous stories and allegories of the gnostics, and the "endless genealogies" (1:4), which are the long lists of spiritual beings and emanations, framed by these heretics. Asceticism, also, in extreme degree is practiced or at least commanded (4:3). The law, probably a mixture of Jewish ordinances and other rules, is taught by the new teachers (1:7 f.), who with conceit and wordy disputations are seeking to enrich themselves in their position as religious instructors (6:3-5). They were a hard set to handle, greedy, aggressive and persistent. To master them was, as David Smith says, "a difficult task demanding experience, discretion and courage; and these qualities Timothy lacked." Paul, by his letter, seeks to place his own at Timothy's service.

After the salutation to "his true child in the faith" (1:1-2) Paul starts to renew his exhortation that Timothy should remain at Ephesus, but in true Pauline fashion leaves it unfinished while he passes on to speak at once of the purpose of his remaining,—the silencing

of the heretical teachers (3-4) who in ignorance and conceit are teaching the law without knowing the true purpose of law as the gospel of God has revealed it (5-11). Paul's own spiritual history shows the power that even the foremost of sinners may receive when Christ mercifully saves him and appoints him to His service (12-17); and the charge he himself has courageously defended, he now entrusts to Timothy (18-20). Next he proceeds to deal with matters pertaining to the church life. Prayers should be offered for all to God who would have all to be saved (2:1-6). Women in modest dress and with fitting docility should give themselves to good works and the duties of motherhood (8-15). The church officers must be above reproach in character and life, experienced and tested; for the church of God is the foundation and support of the truth (3:1-14). This section of the letter closes with what seems to be some lines from an early Christian hymn in praise of Christ (16). Passing on now to injunctions for Timothy personally, he warns him against asceticism,—a course of life to which the young man seems disposed (4:1-10); and with fatherly commands and precepts advises him how to care for himself and his teaching (11-16), and how to deal with the various classes in a church,—the older and younger men or women, the widows who are to be enrolled as church wards and the younger widows who should marry, the elders in their office, and the masters and slaves (5:1-6:2). The letter closes with a denunciation of the avaricious heretics (6:3-10), a charge to Timothy to fight the good fight of the faith (11-16), a message through him to those who have riches (17-19), and a final charge—perhaps autographic—to guard the gospel against the heretics (20-21).

3. The Letter to Titus.

The letter to Titus resembles the first letter to Timothy so strongly that we must suppose the two were written at the same time. Paul, so the letter shows, was planning to spend the winter at Nicopolis (3:12). There were half a dozen cities of that name; but the most famous was in Epirus, and most critics understand it to be meant. It was the leading city in a section of Achaia that Paul had not yet evangelized, and he would use it as headquarters for the work. He wanted Titus as his assistant, and wrote to tell him to be ready to come from Crete as soon as Artemas or Tychicus arrived to take his place there. A simple note to this effect would have been enough; but Paul's mind was still full of the difficulties Timothy had encountered and the advice given him. Titus was an older and possibly abler man than Timothy, and the situation in Crete was not the same as in Ephesus; yet much of the advice given Timothy would be so helpful to Titus that Paul did not hesitate to repeat it, condensing it and omitting the directions for personal improvement. Years before when writing to the Corinthians, Paul called Titus "my brother, my partner, and fellow-worker" (II Cor. 2:13; 8:23); here, with the feeling of an old man, he classes him with Timothy as "my true child."

The salutation is unusually long, and like that of Romans contains an epitome of the gospel (1:1-4). Then Paul starts in at once to give, much as in I Timothy, the qualifications of those elder men who are to be appointed overseers in each city (5-9). There was special need of good men to fill this high office; for the Cretans were notoriously lax, and gnostic Judaizers were busy and must be stopped (10-16). For Titus'

own work of supervision Paul gives him certain charges to the aged men (2:1-2), to the aged women who in turn are to teach the younger (3-5), to the younger men whom he is also to guide by example (6-8), and to the slaves (9-10),—all these being based on the teaching that God has given through Christ (11-15). The duties of Christians to the outside world (3:1-2) are likewise founded on the same gracious revelation of God (3-8). Brief warnings against false teachings and factious teachers follow (9-11). Personal directions about Titus' coming, greetings from those with Paul and to all the church, and a benediction close the letter (12-15). It was carried by Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, who were going to touch at Crete on their way to some other place (13).

4. The Second Letter to Timothy.

When Paul wrote the second time to Timothy he was again in prison (II Tim. 2:9), probably at Rome (1:17),—tradition uniformly says he died there; but Timothy seems to have been no longer at Ephesus. Certainly if summoned with all haste from Ephesus to Rome, he would not be asked to make a journey of several days up to Troas and back for Paul's cloak and books (4:13), nor need to be told that Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus, and Trophimus left ill at Miletus nearby (4:12-13, 20). Probably he was then at Troas or in that neighbourhood evangelizing. But what had happened meanwhile? Paul had visited Troas and had intended to return there, for he left his cloak and travel library behind; he had been evilly treated by Alexander the coppersmith against whom he warns Timothy (4:14 f.); he had been abandoned by all of Asia (1:15); he had stopped at Miletus and probably at

Corinth. These items are like fragments of a picture puzzle of which the great portion is lost. Can we make anything out of them? Did he come from Epirus in the spring and, after crossing to Troas for a visit with Timothy, venture a hasty trip to Ephesus where Alexander informed against him, and none of his Asian converts came forward to help? And was it as a prisoner and on his way to Rome that he parted with Trophimus at Miletus and with Erastus at Corinth? We cannot tell. Neither can we tell what happened afterwards at Rome. When did Demas decamp, and why were Crescens sent to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia (4:10)? What were the charges against Paul? When was his first hearing? And how was he delivered out of the mouth of the lion if no one would take his part (4:16 f.)? Again, these are queries to which there is no answer.

The letter reveals that his second imprisonment is very different from his first. Then he could live in his own hired house as a Roman gentleman; now he is bound as a criminal (2:9) and Onesiphorus has to search the dungeons to find him (1:16 f.). Then he had a large circle of friends about him besides his fellow-workers; now the group is a little one (4:21). Then he confidently expected release; now he as confidently expects that the time of his departure is come (4:6). And it threatens to come even sooner than he expected when he began to write the letter. Evidently there was a sudden change in the situation. In the letter up to 4:9, Paul contemplates Timothy's continuance in his present work; but the letter closes with an earnest and repeated appeal to come to him quickly,—come before the winter shuts off navigation (4:9, 21). Can we use our imagination to explain all this? Tradi-

tion uniformly declares that Paul was martyred under Nero; and, allowing for the time required for the journeys we have supposed, the date could not have been much before the emperor's death in 68 A.D. In the summer of 64 A.D. there had been that disastrous fire which so nearly destroyed Rome. Nero had laid the blame of it upon the Christians, seeking thus to avert the ugly suspicion that he was its author, and had pushed a persecution in which any who bore the name of Christ were put to death by torture. After that time a Christian coming before the courts of Nero on any charge had no possibility of kindly treatment, and little chance of acquittal. Paul's place of confinement would be a dungeon; and he might expect a sentence of death when he was brought before the court. We know not how long he had to wait a trial,—long enough for the ministry of Onesiphorus to be very necessary,—but when he did face his judges, he made such a favourable impression and set forth such an able defence that, being a Roman citizen, he was remanded for a further hearing. The Christians in Rome had been unwilling to risk their lives by testifying in his favour; so possibly he was allowed time to summon witnesses from elsewhere, or the court decided to wait the appearance of other witnesses against him. Though he had little hope of ultimate release, it would be months before these witnesses could appear; meanwhile he could send messages and messengers to his churches, and could comfort his own restless spirit with the reflection that when defending himself he had now, as in the previous instance, fully proclaimed the gospel message to his Gentile judges and the throng that listened in the courtroom (4: 17). These were the circumstances under which he began his letter to Timothy. But before he had com-

pleted it, there came word, we will suppose, that his enemies,—very probably the Jews in Rome,—had furnished new witnesses or new accusations, and a second and undoubtedly fatal trial might be expected in the near future. It is this news that causes him to close his letter hurriedly with an appeal to Timothy to come with all haste, and to send it off at once.

Paul's underlying thought as he began the letter to Timothy is disclosed in the very salutation (1:1-2): his apostleship is "according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,"—the life that no enemy can destroy. He constantly bears Timothy in mind and longs to see him (3-5); and he exhorts him to use the powers God gave him at his ordination, unterrified by the perils into which he has seen the apostle plunged (6-12), and to guard the sound doctrine committed to him (13-14). Paul contrasts the faithlessness of the Asians with the courage of Onesiphorus (15-18), and bids Timothy, like him, to labour and suffer in the gospel (2:1-10), quoting from an early hymn in conclusion (11-13). As for refutation of heretics, which was one of Timothy's hardest tasks, it is best done, not by disputations but by handling aright the word of truth (14-19), and still more by a manifestation in his own life of the Christian virtues (20-26). The prospect, indeed, is dark; every kind of evil man will oppose the progress of the truth, under the pretence of serving God (3:1-10), but Timothy's course should be a reproduction of Paul's, which he knows so well, with the wisdom that comes from the Holy Scriptures which he has known from childhood (10-17). He is to preach the word earnestly and constantly, even though men turn from it, and to fulfil his ministry, because Paul's own labours are nearly ended and his reward is at hand (4:1-8). At this point comes

the sudden change we have noted. In a series of hurried sentences Paul urges Timothy to come to him at once, and indicates where his trusted friends now are, and the dangerous situation in which he finds himself (9-18). Brief salutations, a note about Erastus and Trophimus, and a hurried benediction, end the letter (19-22).

These are the last words of Paul,—fitting, beautiful and touching. His last hours are veiled save as these words throw light upon the spirit with which he met his end. Though on his missionary journeys he had faced death often (II Cor. 11:23), his confidence that he would remain alive to meet his coming Lord seems to have been unshaken down even to the time when he wrote his triumphant anthem of the resurrection of the dead (I Thess. 4:17; I Cor. 15:51). But after the unrecorded sufferings in Ephesus, when as he reports "we despaired even of life" (II Cor. 1:8 f.), he began to look forward to his own decease, first with calm willingness and then with increasing desire (II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23). His longing to depart and be with Christ did not weaken his interest in the great work to which he had set his hand, nor degenerate into a sickly yearning after heavenly rest from labour; but when the time of departure was come, he passed, with the glad assurance of one who had finished the course and kept the faith, to receive the crown of righteousness. Tradition says he was beheaded, which would be the form of capital punishment for a Roman citizen, and that the execution took place outside the city, a precaution observed when there was likelihood of a popular demonstration. The sites of his death and burial are identified by a feebly trustworthy tradition, and are marked

by churches. Various stories concerning his last hours are of little historical value.

5. Paul's Services to Christianity.

Paul was a born leader. Imperious yet considerate and tactful, proud yet with a vein of true humility, burning with zeal though ever strongly practical, overflowing with love but never sentimental, interested in life rather than in things of abstract thought, skilled in reading men and swaying them, an orator who could hold a savage mob or stir a blasé monarch, a poet and mystic who was neither fanciful nor visionary,—nature had equipped him for mastery of his fellows. It would be interesting to compare him with Mahomet, and note in how many ways these two leaders—so widely different in their careers—had the same natural endowments. To natural gifts was added a training both intellectual and spiritual that fitted him for a world mission. We have noted this repeatedly, and must not dwell upon it now; but we must recall his remarkable breadth of sympathy and range of vision. He could rejoice because Christ was preached, even though the preaching differed widely from his own way of presenting the gospel, and was by those who refused to recognize his right to preach. He may seem intolerant in his battle against the Judaizers; but it was their intolerance that roused him to do battle. His plans of evangelism embraced the whole world, at least the whole Roman world; and his thought was in terms, not of individuals or cities but of provinces. He reveals this when he calls Epaenetus the first fruits not merely of Ephesus but of Asia (Rom. 16:5); and the household of Stephanas the first fruits of Achaia (I Cor. 16:15), and the gifts of Philippi and his other churches in that province the contribu-

tions of Macedonia (Rom. 15:26). As Jesus showed His love for all men by reaching down to the dregs and pariahs of Palestine, so Paul showed that same love by reaching out to the farthest bounds of the Roman empire.

It has been asserted by some that Paul was the real founder of Christianity. They say that he gave it the theological doctrines and the universal character without which the simple precepts of Jesus would soon have been forgotten, and the faith in His Messiahship would have been crushed by repeated disappointment about His return. Certain others denounce Paul as a perverter of Christianity. They maintain that the limpid stream of the gospel was polluted and turned from its course by his rabbinical ideas and abstruse metaphysics, and that only in his development of the ethical and social teachings of Jesus can he be accepted to-day. The truth of these statements depends upon the nature of the Master for whom Paul gave his life. Was Jesus such an one as he proclaimed,—the eternal Son of God incarnate; or was He only a remarkable, spiritually-minded son of Abraham? Is He to-day merely a shade, growing more shadowy as the world sweeps on into light; or is He the greatest of living, acting personalities? Is union with Him another phrase for kindly sympathy with His thought and purpose, so far as we can discover them in the past; or is it complete surrender to an unseen but present Lord? In short, did Paul create the Christ whom he preached, or did he lay hold on Him,—or rather, to use his own phrase, was he laid hold on by Him? Without discussing these questions we may say confidently that if the Christian church in its great ecumenical creeds has truly stated what Jesus is, then Paul may be declared to have been the one of

the apostles who best understood His mission and proclaimed His truth,—"the congenial interpreter of the message of Jesus." The development of Christianity through Paul was from the seed his Master had planted. What he did was to change Christianity from a Jewish to a world religion by breaking down all barriers and placing it at the head of the highest thought of the ages. And as he laboured to preserve the unity of the church,—the body of Christ with one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all; so he strove to present the unity of its Head as truly God and also truly man. Much that was precious and distinctive in Paul's teachings was later on rejected when the church entered upon degenerate days. Instead of justification by faith alone men began to teach merit gained by good deeds. The immediate access of all believers to God was blocked by creating a priesthood. The freedom from law, for which he fought so stoutly, was destroyed by framing and enforcing a new code of Christian laws. And instead of recognizing Christianity to be a life,—"Christ in me,"—it came to be presented as the subscription to a creed,—orthodoxy. But all Paul's teachings still remain in his immortal letters at the service of the church whenever she chooses to use them. And so, though dead, he yet speaketh.

XVI

THE LATER CHURCH IN PALESTINE

CHRISTIANITY soon began to ignore the parent church, not so much because the Gentile Christians greatly outnumbered the Jewish, as because the church in Palestine ceased to have the life and energy necessary for leadership. It became conservative and stereotyped, and had little interest in the broader work outside its confines. Christianity means missions, and Jerusalem ceased to be missionary. From that hour its history is only a footnote in the great story of the progress of the Kingdom. We must not, however, overlook the tremendous obstacles that confronted the parent church, nor fail to give full credit and generous sympathy to Jewish Christians in their brave struggle against them. As Weizsäcker says, "Christian churches formed in a heathen city certainly never experienced, either at the outset or throughout their history, any hatred and opposition like that which surrounded believers among their Jewish compatriots; and nowhere was the self-sacrifice of renunciation, the conflict with the power of a traditional doctrine, greater than in the case of native Jews." Moreover, the Jewish church was closely connected with Jewish political fortunes, and Palestine was now entering upon the great disaster and tragedy of its history. This sad chapter must be outlined as the background for a sketch of the fortunes of the church.

1. Rome and Palestine.

Palestine was one of the important provinces of the Roman Empire, made so by its position as a frontier barrier against the Arabs and Persians, and as a narrow bridge connecting Egypt with Asia Minor. There was every inducement for the Roman government to keep it loyal and contented, but this was no easy task. The idiosyncrasies of the Jews were many and strong, and a Gentile ruler even with the best intentions would often arouse opposition and hatred. And the whole Jewish conception of national life, with God as sole ruler and the Law controlling things secular as well as sacred, was opposed to a quiet acceptance of Rome's authority. The recent brief but intoxicating taste of independence in the days of the Maccabees, and the vivid prophetic pictures of Israel's future dominion over all nations, kept the Jews restless and inclined to revolt. Nevertheless, every sagacious patriot could not but see the madness of rising against the overwhelming force of Rome, and would counsel submission and patience until such time as Jehovah Himself might come to their relief.

Herod Agrippa I (41-44 A.D.), to whom the Romans had entrusted the domains of his grandfather, Herod the Great, was an able ruler, "a careful imitator of the old Herod, only milder in disposition and somewhat more sly" (Schürer). Being himself a Jew by nationality, though an Idumaean by race, he was far more acceptable to the Jews than a Roman procurator, and his endeavour to please them (Acts 12:3) made him popular. When he died his son was deemed too young to succeed him; so the whole of Palestine, as formerly Judea and Samaria, was put under a pro-

curator, subject to the governor of Syria. There were seven of these procurators up to the time of the revolt, even as there had been seven between Archaelaus and Herod Agrippa. As foreigners they usually had little knowledge of the Jews or sympathy with their peculiar institutions; and like most petty governors, the majority were insolent and tyrannical. Felix was the fourth of the seven. Up to his time there had been only sporadic outbreaks against the Roman rule; now his oppressive acts made the spirit of revolt universal. The party of the Zealots, who advocated armed resistance, greatly increased; the Sicarii or assassins appeared; and religious fanatics drew crowds into the wilderness by promising to set up the kingdom of God (Acts 21:38). Festus, with the best of intentions, had too little knowledge of the situation and ruled for too short a time to undo the mischief wrought by his predecessor. The last two procurators, Albinus and Gessius Florus, had but one aim,—to make what they could out of their office by every sort of extortion and iniquity. The final outrage was when the latter robbed the temple treasury of seventeen talents. The whole nation rose against him, and the daily sacrifice for the emperor was stopped, which was an open declaration of revolt. The governor of Syria came with an army to crush the rebellion, and was defeated near Jerusalem with heavy loss. All Palestine now prepared for war with Rome. This was in the autumn of 66 A.D.

The next spring Vespasian with his son Titus led a Roman army from Antioch against Galilee, and by the end of the summer had subdued it. He went into winter quarters at Caesarea, intending to continue the campaign the next year; but the death of Nero, June,

68 A.D., made him suspend his preparations for the siege of Jerusalem; and the rapid succession of phantom emperors,—Galba, Otho, Vitellius,—held him inactive until his own army in July, 69 A.D., proclaimed him emperor and he went to Rome to secure his throne. Meanwhile, Jerusalem was rent with fanatical, civil strife. Three parties held possession of different parts of it, and mercilessly fought each other, even destroying the grain that had been stored up against a siege. A few days before the Passover of 70 A.D., when the city was packed with pilgrims, Titus came with a Roman army and invested it. Despite horrible sufferings from famine the Jews refused to surrender, believing that in the hour of utter extremity Jehovah would grant a miraculous deliverance as when Sennacherib besieged the city (II Kings 19:35). In August the temple was captured; and, according to Josephus, though Titus had given strict orders to preserve it, a firebrand hurled by an excited soldier caused it to go up in flames. Another and, perhaps, more probable account is that after the close of the siege Titus ordered the temple to be destroyed, thinking that thus the religion of the Jews and of the Christians would be more easily blotted out. In September the last portion of the city was taken, and it was razed to the ground,—a fragment of the wall being left to show its former strength and protect the Roman garrison left in charge. Of the host of Jewish captives the finest were sent to Rome to grace the triumph of Titus, and the rest were sold into slavery. Judea was now made a separate province with a special governor residing at Caesarea.

The fall of Jerusalem caused great changes in the inner life of the Jewish people. The destruction of

the temple made impossible all the religious rites connected with it, and ended the occupation of the priests. There was no longer a Sanhedrin; and the Sadducees, having lost fortune and influence, disappeared forever. The Pharisees became the sole leaders; and the Law was studied and developed with increasing diligence, though much of it was no longer practicable. Jabne (Jamnia), a town on the coast south of Joppa, became the headquarters of the rabbis, and their decisions were sought by the devout and given the authority of the vanished Sanhedrin. The Messianic hope still remained, and so increased in force that the next century saw a new revolt inspired by it. But for the present the political power of Judaism was utterly crushed. Outside of Palestine the Jews suffered little. The half shekel, which they had hitherto paid as a tax to support the temple, was now made a Roman tribute which Vespasian applied to the support of the Capitoline Jupiter:—that was about all.

2. The Jews and the Christians.

After the persecution beginning with the death of Stephen had ceased, the Christians in Palestine enjoyed a period of comparative peace (Acts 9:31). The Hellenists had fled to their homes in foreign lands, and the Hebrews were more than ever careful to observe all Jewish laws and avoid the suspicion that they were not loyal Jews. If regard for personal safety might not inspire this action, the desire to win their nation to acceptance of Jesus as Messiah would certainly do so. James the Just is said to have worn his knees to callousness in prayers for the conversion of his countrymen; and a similar zeal filled the hearts of others, even of Paul (Rom. 10:1; 9:3). Doubt-

less one reason why the great apostle to the Gentiles was so disliked by his brethren in Jerusalem was their belief that by offering the gospel to the heathen he was causing the Jews to shut their hearts against it. The glimpse we gain of the church in Jerusalem at his last visit reveals that its members were more than ever "all zealous for the Law" (Acts 21:20). Nevertheless, the persecution had done much towards sharply differentiating the Christians and creating distrust of them; and the fire of persecution still smouldered. Just what charge caused the action of Herod Agrippa I against James, the brother of John, and Peter, we do not know; but the inspiration of it was the popular dislike of the Christians. Anything like a general persecution, however, was averted by the death of Herod and the coming of Roman procurators, who neither knew nor cared about the difference between Jews and Christians, and who would not allow popular tumults. An opportunity for independent action arose when the death of Festus left Palestine without a Roman ruler until the arrival of his successor. During this brief interregnum Ananus, the high priest, put to death James the Just and certain others, probably Christians; but it is hardly likely that he did this through religious zeal; for as a Sadducee he cared little about the Law, while James was distinguished among his brethren for scrupulousness in observing it. The leading men of the city, who would be Pharisees, condemned the deed of Ananus; and in consequence he was deposed from his office, though he had held it only three months.

As the spirit of revolution increased among the Jews, the position of the Christians became more difficult. The precepts of Jesus forbade them from draw-

ing the sword; yet a refusal to do so seemed disloyalty to their country. Also, the completion of the temple (62-64 A.D.), work upon which had been going on for more than eighty years, awakened an enthusiasm for the Jewish faith which would sweep many Christians back into their former religion, and cause the others to be more sharply criticised. When at last the war broke out, still greater changes took place. The Christians of Galilee fled from the deluge of blood which covered that land, going over into Decapolis or to their brethren in Tyre, Caesarea and other cities; and the bitter party strifes in Jerusalem the following years led the Christians of that city to take refuge elsewhere as their Master had ordered (Matt. 24:15 f.). Pella, across the Jordan in the old land of Gilead, was one place of shelter; but the most strictly Judaistic party would not go to a semi-Gentile city, but rather would "flee unto the mountains," seeking a home in sequestered places of Judea until the war ended.

After the end of the war the Christians of Palestine found themselves in a sadly isolated position. The Jews could not forgive their refusal to share in the rebellion, and though now unable to persecute, hated them more heartily than ever. And Gentile Christians could have no sympathy with their extreme legalistic ideas and their claim to be the elect remnant of the Lord's people to whom all His promises were restricted. Thus left to themselves they grew more narrow, conceited and bitter. Their poverty caused them to be called Ebionites ("poor men"); and their increasing rejection of Christian doctrines, especially those set forth by Paul, brought about their condemnation as heretics. This was in the second and third centuries; they survived for a time longer, but finally dis-

appeared. That which Paul had laboured to prevent—the split of the church into a Jewish and a Gentile section—was thus brought about by the war; but the Jewish section was left so small and weak that henceforth it had no influence. The danger of a dominant Palestinian mother-church, whose natural Judaistic tendencies would be nourished by its environment, was forever removed. And the privileged position claimed by the Jewish Christian was destroyed, not so much by the logic of Paul as by the sterner and more unanswerable logic of events. As for the Jews in foreign lands, the destruction of their sacred city increased their hatred of all Gentiles, especially of Christians, so that henceforth there was little possibility of inducing them to accept Jesus as the Christ.

3. The Epistle to the Hebrews.

The letter that we call the Epistle to the Hebrews did not, of course, bear any title originally, but has been thus designated as far back as we can trace it. Many able scholars to-day think that it was written to Gentiles and not to Hebrews, but this seems, as Westcott says, "an ingenious paradox." The letter presupposes in its readers a knowledge of Jewish institutions and an interest in Judaism such as few Gentile Christians would have. Even to-day much of it is unattractive to the average Christian because he lacks a familiar acquaintance with the Old Testament. Like the First Epistle of John it has no address; but it is evidently written to some particular church in which the writer has once had a place (13:19), and with whose condition, therefore, he is well acquainted. The church has borne persecution (10:32 f.), but not unto martyrdom (12:4), though some in bonds have

claimed its generous aid and sympathy (6:10; 10:34). Its members know Timothy who with the writer is about to visit them (13:23). The temple worship has charms for them, and they are tempted to go back to Judaism,—so the whole epistle indicates. This description would suit many Jewish-Christian churches, but not Jerusalem which had resisted unto blood, and was a recipient rather than a bestower of alms, and would not be interested in Timothy nor willing to accept the authoritative tone of the letter. Some church where Gentile vices were prevalent (13:4), yet near enough to Jerusalem for the temple worship to be strongly attractive, would seem to be indicated. Caesarea is a good guess. It must have ministered to Paul and others in bonds; it would know Timothy and various companions of Paul; it would be made up largely of Jewish Christians; and during the troublesome days of the rising revolution it would be persecuted by the Jews. Also, the church at Caesarea originally had in it Italians,—Cornelius and his friends of the Italian cohort (Acts 10:1 f.); so possibly the Italians who send greetings (Heb. 13:23), are of that same cohort now stationed elsewhere.

If the readers of the epistle are a problem, still more is the writer. All scholars agree that the letter is not by Paul. Though its teachings have a Pauline flavour, they are from an independent standpoint; and the writer expressly places himself among the Christians who had received the gospel from them that heard Jesus originally (2:1-4). He writes excellent Greek,—better than that of any other New Testament author; and his polished style and full vocabulary show him to be a finished scholar. "He was without doubt, the finest and most cultured literary genius of

the primitive church" (McGiffert). "That he writes as a literary man," says Ropes, "is one of the reasons why his epistle is far less interesting than those of the less trained and more human Paul. * * * We find ourselves in an intellectual and almost dogmatic atmosphere." Martin Luther thought that Apollos, the "learned Alexandrian, mighty in the scriptures," might be the author, especially as the epistle shows both the Alexandrian school of thought and the influence of Paul. But Luke, Silas, Barnabas, Mark and others have been put forward. The latest claimant is none other than Priscilla! Harnack suggests that she wrote it, and that later on her name was suppressed because of monkish prejudice against women teachers. "Who it was that wrote the epistle, God only knows," said Origen in the third century; and the uncertainty about its authorship caused hesitancy about putting it in the New Testament canon. Finally it was included, and to make its place more secure it was ascribed to Paul; yet the position where it stands in Western manuscripts,—after all the epistles of Paul instead of among his longer ones,—shows the doubt about this description.

The date of the epistle is likewise a matter of uncertainty. Apparently the temple worship is still going on; and certainly if the date is after 70 A.D., the destruction of the temple would be mentioned, and the temptation to go back to Judaism would have largely ceased. But it cannot be many years earlier; for those who were the first teachers have passed away (13:7; 2:3), and there has been time for religious growth (5:12) though, as the many warnings indicate, growth has not come as it should. A critical day is close at hand (10:25; 8:13), and severer sufferings

are to be expected (12:4; 13:13). The savage persecution of the Christians at Rome by Nero (64 A.D.) may have caused this expectation; for a report of it would quickly spread throughout the empire, rousing the provincial officials to activity against the hated sect. We are tempted to fix the date at 68 A.D., when forty years since the church began were just ending (3:9), when the carnage in Galilee and the struggle for the throne of Rome would seem the first stage in the fulfilment of Haggai's prophecy (12:26), and when Timothy would be set at liberty by the death of Paul (13:23). But the likelihood is small that Christians would incline to go back to Judaism after the Jewish revolt had become complete. A date just before that revolt is more probable. Several causes then combined to draw Jewish Christians back from their new faith to the old. There was the intense outburst of national spirit with which they could not but sympathize, and which seemed to demand that in no respect should they separate themselves from their brethren. There was the increasing evidence that the Jews as a nation were not going to accept Jesus and, therefore, that it would be more and more difficult for Jewish Christians to join with them in keeping the ordinances of the Law. There was the probability of severer suffering inflicted by the Roman government at the instigation of the Jews and of the Gentiles also. And there was the failure of the coming of Christ which they had confidently expected would bring the final answer to all the difficulties about the ignominious ending of His public ministry, and would initiate the triumphant establishment of His rule over Palestine and the whole world. Added to all these was the loss of tried and trusted leaders. The apostles were

scattered or dead, and James the Just had suffered martyrdom, leaving the Jewish Christians as sheep without a shepherd. No wonder they longed for the old familiar fold.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the men who were drawing back and disposed to return to Judaism again. Its keyword is "Better," thirteen times repeated; and its aim is to set forth the superiority of the new faith over the old, or the sufficiency and finality of Christianity as the last and clearest divine revelation (1:1-4). All that Judaism contains is only a type and foreshadowing of what is to be found in Christianity; and the old covenant is nigh to vanishing away, giving place to the new and better. But the epistle is not an academic discussion of the comparative merits of Judaism and Christianity: it is preeminently a "word of exhortation" (13:22). These men who are tempted to give up the confession of their faith are wavering, not from intellectual difficulties but from a lack of religious earnestness. They are drifting with the current (2:1), unwilling to press on to perfection (6:1 f.), failing to consider the significance of Christ and His work (3:1; 12:3). Their former consecration has disappeared in moral and spiritual apathy and decay; and they greatly need to be warned against an evil heart of unbelief (2:1-3; 3:12). The epistle, therefore, is fully as much practical as doctrinal; but, unlike Paul, the writer does not make one main division between the two,—he follows each doctrinal statement immediately with a practical exhortation "to give the more earnest heed * * * for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."

The opening sentence of the epistle sets forth the

truth upon which all that follows is based. From the Son of God, sole agent in creation, revelation and redemption, we have received a full and final message, of which the words of the ancient prophets were only multiform fragments (1:1-3). His superiority to the angels, through whom God's message was thought to come, is shown by the very name, Son, as contrasted with that of angel, i.e., messenger (4-14). Therefore, we ought to give to His words more earnest heed than to any others, inasmuch as all things are subject to Him (2:1-8a). True, for a little while He was made lower than the angels, sharing our flesh and blood and tasting of death; but this was that through His sufferings He might be the author of our salvation (8b-18). Or, if we contrast Him with Moses, again it is the difference between a son and a servant; and the danger of rejecting His word is correspondingly great:—the rest that remaineth for the people of God, which those who followed Moses and Joshua did not enter into because of their disobedience, will not be gained by us, if we likewise lack faith and obedience (3:1-4:13). Jesus is our Great High Priest, full of that sympathy which gives us boldness to claim His help (14-16). He was made such by God after the order not of Aaron but of Melchizedek (5:1-10). This is a subject concerning which, the writer declares, what I have to say is properly for those who are advanced in knowledge; whereas you are still in the infantile stage, and close to the hopeless condition of apostasy; though I say this rather to stir you up than to discourage you (5:11-6:12), since the immutable promises of God are your strong encouragement (6:13-20). Christ's priesthood, of which Melchizedek's is the type, is better than Aaron's because it is universal, eternal, abso-

lute (7:1-28), because it is in a heavenly sanctuary and of a better covenant (8:1-13); and because He offers a better sacrifice, purifying us by His own blood,—a sacrifice that needs not to be repeated often but is once for all (9:1-10; 18). Therefore, let us draw near Him with a true heart, in fulness of faith, in holy and active life, conscious of the fearful fate of those who, knowing the truth, sin wilfully (10:19-31). Let remembrance of the former conflict of suffering make you bold for that which is to come, and look forward steadfastly to the coming of Christ, full of the faith that is unto the saving of the soul (10:32-39). It was by such faith that the long line of God's great servants triumphed in the past (11:1-40). And since these are looking down upon us, and Jesus is the author and perfecter of faith, let us endure all suffering, remembering that God sends it, not as a bitter punishment but as a profitable, fatherly chastening (12:1-13). A life of peace and holiness should be pursued with even more care and fear under the dispensation of Jesus than under that of Moses (14-29). Love, good works, and steadfastness in the doctrine are enjoined (13:1-17); and the epistle closes with some brief personal messages (18-25).

In Hebrews we find a view of the Law distinct in many ways from that of Paul. Both agree that the Law was of divine origin and was a preparation for the coming of Christ; but while Paul, as we have seen, thought mainly of its moral requirements and the way in which human inability to meet them revealed the need of a divine Saviour, the writer of Hebrews thought rather of its ritual and sacrifices and of the way in which these foreshadowed the work of Christ. With

somewhat of Platonic philosophy he held that heaven, "the world to come whereof we speak" (2:5) is the realm of realities, and that earth has only their imperfect, fleeting shadows and symbols. But he also held that faith makes that future, invisible realm a present, actual possession for the Christian (11:1; 6:4-5). So while all the Jewish institutions are merely "copies of the things in heaven," "a shadow of the good things to come," the Christian by faith has "the very image of those things" (9:23; 10:1). For example, the tabernacle which Moses made according to the pattern showed him in the mount, was an earthly, imperfect copy or symbol of the true, heavenly tabernacle in which Christ ever ministers (8:5, 9; 11, 24), and into which His followers may in fulness of faith enter even now (10:19). The Law, then, was a failure, not because it was weak through the flesh, as Paul would affirm, but because it was merely an indistinct shadow, faintly portraying the Christian realities, and meaningless apart from faith. Paul reckoned that the Law no more had any value for the Christian, and so doubtless did the writer of Hebrews. But would the man who longed for some legalistic, ritualistic form of religion be content to give it up entirely? Would he not feel that in some way it might be filled with the reality it lacked,—be spiritualized and retained. A Sabbath that truly brought the rest of God, priests who served under Jesus as the Great High Priest, sacrifices that truly represented or reproduced the one sacrifice of Christ,—were these forbidden, and would they not be helpful for Christian living? Such certainly was the way in which the church in later centuries reasoned and shaped its ritual accordingly. It had its sacred days, its army of priests,

and its sacrifice of the mass. And the rebukes of Paul and the warnings of Hebrews sounded in ears that heard not.

4. The Epistle of Jude.

An epistle, little in size but large in problems, is that which bears the name of Jude or Judas. The name was a very common one,—made so, perhaps, by the fame of Judas Maccabaeus; but the writer is further described as the brother of James, another very common name yet in this instance doubtless meaning James the Just. We know that one of the four brothers of Jesus was named Jude (Mk 6:3), and that like the others he did not accept Him as Messiah until after the resurrection. That is all we know about him. Eusebius tells us that the emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.) ordered the relatives of Jesus to be brought before him, as he feared they might head an insurrection. The grandchildren of Jude were found and brought; and they proved to be such humble peasants, devoid of earthly ambition, that Domitian dismissed them in contempt. Evidently Jude was then dead, or he would have been brought. But it is hard to believe that the Epistle of Jude was written much before that time. It speaks of the apostles as if they had ceased to preach (17-18), and of "the faith" as something formulated and handed down from an earlier generation (3); and its rebukes reveal a development of gnosticism and moral corruption much beyond what we have found hitherto in the church. The author's Jewish name, his familiarity with the Old Testament, and his use of two Jewish apocalypses written about the beginning of the century,—the Book of Enoch (14-15) and the Assumption of Moses (9)—make us sure he was a Jew. His

quotations from these two apocryphal books as if they were historical and inspired, produce a perplexing problem in inspiration, and were probably the chief reason why the epistle had to struggle for a place in the New Testament. His command of the Greek language suggests that he learned it rather late in life:—he has a vocabulary of stately, sonorous, sometimes poetical Greek words, but he lacks skill in the formation of sentences. He seems to be familiar with Paul's letters, or at least with the Christian terms developed by Paul; and the phrase "our common salvation," as well as the sins he condemns, would indicate that he was writing to a church made up of Gentiles alone or of both Gentiles and Jews. If so, he could not have belonged to the narrow Palestinian Christians. Despite all that suggests the contrary, he may have been the brother of James. Otherwise, we may suppose that he described himself simply as "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ," and some later reader, naturally supposing that this Jude was the brother of James, added that identification as a memorandum on the margin of the manuscript whence it was copied into the text. We have little means of determining the church to which Jude wrote. One made up in whole or larger part of Gentiles, near enough to Palestine to arouse the interest of a Jewish Christian teacher, and in a community where sensuality and godlessness abounded, would meet the requirements. Antioch in Syria is a favourite conjecture, but Alexandria and other cities have been suggested.

The epistle is a hasty, forcible note to warn the church against certain new teachers whose profession of Christian piety is only a cloak for foulest lust and avarice. Though we have but a very general description of their teaching and acts, their errors seem to be

practical rather than doctrinal; they deny Christ by turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (4); they are filled with pride, and scoff at all spiritual agencies (8); they are "shepherds that without fear feed themselves" (12). That a church should endure such men and even follow them, shows how the early enthusiasm and consecration are dying out, and lusts once banished are creeping back. There was always danger, as we have seen, that the Pauline doctrine of liberty might be turned into an excuse for libertinism; and the gnostic teaching about the material world could justify sensuality as well as inspire asceticism. The opportunity of base men in a simple Christian community with its new freedom of the sexes and its night meetings and love feasts is evident, especially when the members had recently come out from a licentious pagan religion, and were still imperfectly trained in Christian virtues. These fleshly, arrogant teachers deserved the sweeping condemnation of Jude; and those who were inclined to follow them needed the warnings he heaps up from Old Testament fates of those who gave themselves over to lust and insolence. Yet there is nothing of the Pharisaic spirit in Jude's heart, but rather a Christlike pity and yearning to save (22:23).

XVII

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

BY the end of the Apostolic Age nearly all remembrance of what Jesus said and did except what is recorded in our Four Gospels seems to have ceased; for only some sayings of little value and doubtful authenticity, and a few slight incidents besides that of the woman taken in adultery, which finally was inserted in our gospels, came down by tradition and were preserved by second century writers. To be sure, the statement of John 21:25 that a record of what Jesus did would fill the world with books, suggests that its writer was acquainted with a host of unwritten details; but nothing confirms this. The lack of reference to the life of Jesus in the New Testament epistles indicates that Christians in the early part of the Apostolic Age had no keen historical interest in the earthly years of their Lord. The period was one when an intense realization of His presence spiritually, and a confident expectation of His return bodily, deterred the disciples from dwelling on the past. We do not write biographies of friends who are with us, or are coming tomorrow. There may have been also a feeling that in His earthly ministry Jesus was so hindered by unbelief and hatred that He could not fully reveal His power or teach His truth, and that, therefore, it was not wise to emphasize the past as His perfect manifestation. Nevertheless, the practical needs as well as the natural curiosity of the early believers would counterbalance

this indifference or aversion to the past, and seek from the apostolic eye-witnesses some account of what Jesus had done and taught. And before the first generation of Christians had largely passed away, the gospel story had taken definite form and permanent record in our first three gospels, which from their interrelation we call the Synoptic Gospels. The process by which this came about must be considered at length.

1. The Oral Gospel.

The story of what they had seen and heard when with Jesus must have formed the chief part of "the apostles' teaching" in the days immediately after Pentecost (Acts 2:42). There was little else they could teach, because they themselves had barely entered upon the great new world of Christian experience; and there was nothing that the early converts, most of whom had never known Jesus, would find more interesting or appealing. There was no reason for putting the story into writing since the narrators were constantly at hand; and there was no inclination to do so, because an Oriental feels that statements most sacred and intimate should not be written down lest profane eyes fall upon them. For example, the Jewish traditional Law, which was deemed most holy, was transmitted for generations by grave rabbis who taught it orally to little groups of reverent disciples; and it was not put into writing until at last fear arose lest all who knew it and could teach it might perish by persecution. The story of Jesus, told by the apostles, would at first contain only such incidents as answered the eager questions or evident needs of their hearers, and would be most incomplete. Those converts who returned to their own homes in foreign lands soon after Pentecost must have

carried back a very imperfect evangel, and have been correspondingly crippled as they tried to proclaim it. And had the church at Jerusalem at once sent forth missionaries or been scattered by its foes, the formation of any adequate account of the ministry of our Lord would have been much hindered and delayed. But in God's providence the church remained for some time in peace and union at Jerusalem where it could constantly look to the apostles for the gospel facts. And as the apostles repeated again and again to public gatherings and to individuals the things concerning Jesus, their story gradually grew more complete and took on a stereotyped form, as stories told over and over inevitably do. It became what we call the Oral Gospel.

What this Oral Gospel must have been, we can with some confidence determine. Because the apostles spoke as eye-witnesses (Acts 1:22), it would begin with the great Galilean ministry,—the preaching of John and the baptism and temptation of Jesus serving as a brief preface, and the Judean ministry, which but few had shared, being omitted as seemingly unimportant or a failure. And because the motive in telling it was a desire to convert unbelievers or to guide the brethren in Christian living, it would not be in any strict sense a chronological history but rather a selection of incidents and sayings that proved to be most helpful. It would contain many of the miracles, which are always impressive, and but few of the deeper teachings of Jesus, since these teachings do not hold the attention as well and require a degree of spiritual growth before they can be appreciated. And it would dwell upon the incidents of the last week, the tragedy of His crucifixion, and the proofs of His resurrection, because these are the most sacred scenes in Christ's life, and make the

most effective evangelistic appeal. When once it had taken on a recognized, definite form, it would be treasured in the memory of the hearers, and become the common property of the church. Even after there were written gospels, many would prefer the oral. Papias, who was born about 70 A.D., tells how he questioned those who had heard the apostles; "for," he says, "I did not think that what was to be gotten from books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice." And Irenaeus, who was born some fifty years later, when describing how he heard Polycarp tell what he learned about Jesus, says, "These things, through the mercy of God which was upon me, I then listened to attentively, noting them down, not on paper but in my heart; and continually, through God's grace, I recall them accurately." The feeling that an oral gospel was preeminently in the heart must have been shared by not a few.

2. The Sayings of Jesus.

Averse though the disciples may have been to putting in writing that which the apostles told them, they would soon find good reasons for doing it to a certain extent. The words of Jesus are not as easily held in memory as the incidents of His ministry, and exactness in repeating them is most important; so a hearer who was accustomed to make memoranda would naturally write down a saying that specially interested him, whether he wished to preserve it for his own future use, or to pass it on to a friend. In the old rubbish heaps of Egypt to-day we are finding *ostraca*,—broken bits of pottery, the cheapest, handiest and most lasting of stationery,—on which are single texts of Scripture jotted down when Christianity was still new on the

Nile. We have found there, likewise, fragments of papyrus manuscript containing a series of short verses, each prefaced by the words "Jesus said." These illustrate the process that must have gone on at Jerusalem. Whether the apostles when they were with Jesus made notes of what He said, we do not know. The one most likely to do it was Matthew, whose earlier occupation as a tax collector may have accustomed him to aid his memory by his pen. But we may be sure that among those who listened to the apostles were some who would write down the most memorable sayings of Jesus with or without a statement of the occasion that called them forth.

The words of Jesus most desired and cherished were those that might serve as a guide in daily living or bring cheer and light concerning the future; so we find that precepts for conduct, directions and encouragements concerning prayer, and statements about the Lord's coming and His kingdom form the larger part of what has been preserved. There are indications that little groups of His sayings bearing upon some special subject were formed and circulated before any larger collection was made. But larger collections would follow; and we know that one of these bore the name of Matthew, for Papias, writing about 140 A.D., says, "Matthew compiled the Sayings (Logia) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he was able." That Papias was not referring to our present Gospel of Matthew seems clear, because that Gospel bears no marks of being a translation from the Hebrew (by which Papias means Aramaic, cf. Acts 21:40), and Sayings would not be a fitting name for it. Some such collection, as we shall see, was one of the sources used by the authors of Matthew and Luke: and Eng-

lish scholars are inclined to believe that it was the one mentioned by Papias; so they call it the Logia, though German scholars usually call it simply the Q (Quelle) document. We can to a fairly satisfactory degree reconstruct this document from Matthew and Luke; and possibly some day a copy of it may be discovered in the sands of Egypt or elsewhere.

3. The Gospel of Mark.

John Mark, though in a subordinate position, played a more important part in the apostolic church than we sometimes realize. The fact that he was a cousin of Barnabas, who was from Cyprus, and that he had a Roman name, suggests that he was a Hellenist; but his family in the early days of the church lived in Jerusalem, and their house was one of the gathering-places of the church (Acts 12:12). Possibly this was the house where Jesus ate the Passover, and Mark was the young man who barely escaped arrest at Gethsemane (Mark 14:51). When Barnabas and Paul went back to Antioch after the famine visit, they took him with them; and on the first missionary journey he was their attendant as far as Perga (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13). Because he forsook them at that point Paul would not take him on the second journey, but with Barnabas he made another tour through Cyprus (15:37 f.). Later on he made his peace with Paul, and became his assistant and was with him in Rome (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24). During the second imprisonment he was working somewhere in one of Paul's fields, and the apostle bade Timothy pick him up and bring him along to Rome (II Tim. 4:11). We hear of him once more, doubtless after the death of Paul, as being with Peter in Babylon (Rome); and the way the aged apostle

leans on him is shown by his calling him "my son" (I Peter 5:13). Tradition says he travelled with Peter as his interpreter because the Galilean fisherman knew little Greek and less Latin. "Useful for ministering" is what Paul pronounces Mark: words of high praise, though the world does not always count them so.

The origin of the Gospel of Mark is stated by Papias as follows: "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though indeed not in order, whatever he remembered of the things said and done by Christ. For he had neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him; but afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter who used to suit his teachings to the needs of his hearers without attempting to give an orderly arrangement of the Lord's words; so that Mark cannot be blamed for thus having written down some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he was careful,—to omit nothing of what he had heard and to state nothing falsely." If we accept the statement,—and there seems little reason why we should not,—the Gospel of Mark is the story of Jesus as Peter used to tell it on his evangelistic tours. Not that Peter would necessarily give all of it at one time, or that he would follow the order we find in the Gospel. As Papias suggests, he would select the portions suited to the needs of his hearers. For example, he might tell the story of the resurrection first of all, to hold the attention of a strange audience,—even as Paul started to do at Athens. When Mark put the whole in writing, he would naturally choose an order more chronological. The Gospel of Mark, then, may be accepted as practically the Oral Gospel framed by Peter and the others at Jerusalem. The book itself

confirms this connection with Peter. Its contents are the same as those outlined in the report of what Peter told Cornelius about Jesus (Acts 10:37-42), and are evidently chosen for evangelistic purposes. It has a directness and rapidity of narration, a conversational tone, a use of colloquial terms, and a lack of literary finish, that make us feel we are listening to the plain tale of an unlettered man whose sole object is to hold our attention until he has made us realize that Jesus is the Son of God. It is the story of an eye-witness who gives certain minute and graphic details, not because they are of any importance, but because they stand out distinctly in his recollection (e.g., 4:36-38; 6:39; 10:50). And when we note its partial or total omission of incidents in which Peter played a prominent part,—the call of the first four disciples, the walking on the water, the promise of the rock and the keys, the question about forgiving a brother, the payment of the half-shekel,—we are increasingly convinced that the narrator was Peter. It is the story of a faithful witness who does not hesitate to give the unvarnished facts, e.g., that Jesus was a carpenter, that his friends at one time thought him crazy, that in order to open a blind man's eyes and heal a deaf and tongue-tied man he had to try more than once. Matthew and Luke omit these because it seems hardly reverent to state them, or because they may be stumbling-blocks to faith. The narrator describes the life of his Lord in a familiar way because he has shared it familiarly; and his description makes us see Jesus most nearly as the disciples themselves saw Him. Through some mischance, which we can only surmise, the closing leaves of this Gospel were lost; and we lack what may have been a most valuable account of

the resurrection appearances. The present ending, 16:9-20, as also a shorter ending found in some manuscripts, is an attempt to supply the deficiency; it reveals the second century emphasis of the efficacy of baptism, but for the life of Jesus it is too late to be of value.

Eusebius says that Mark wrote the Gospel after both Peter and Paul were dead; but Clement of Alexandria says he wrote it before Peter died. Possibly both statements are correct, and there were two editions. Translating it to audience after audience, Mark would soon know Peter's story verbatim; and nothing is more likely than that some wealthy Christian would ask him to dictate it to slaves who were trained amanuenses, that he might have copies to send to friends or to keep after the apostle was gone. And when Peter died there would be new reason why the story should be preserved in writing; and Mark when doing this would naturally adapt it to a special circle of readers and might amplify it. In its present form the narrative is evidently prepared for Roman readers, e.g., Latin words are sometimes used (6:27; 12:15; 15:16, 39), the Roman equivalent is given with Jewish money (12:42), Jewish customs are explained (7:2-4; 14:12), and the Aramaic words of Jesus, repeatedly quoted, are always translated (3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34 et al.). The parables in 4:1-34 bear marks of having been taken from a collection of parables; and the long eschatalogical discourse of 13:1-37 seems to have come from a special written source. If there were two editions of the Gospel, and if our present text rests upon both of them, then certain peculiarities of it may be explained without denying Mark's authorship. These are not im-

portant enough to be considered here. What we should specially note concerning Mark is that it gives us the earliest form of the gospel story, our closest approach to the Twelve as they tell about their Master. This is the story they went forth telling to the nations, not preaching a theology but proclaiming the facts of their Lord's life, and trusting to the simple presentation of them for creation of faith in Him. Even to-day these facts thus told are the best evangelistic instrument; and the Gospel of Mark is one of the first books to be translated in any mission field because it is so effective in gaining the attention and impressing the thought of a man who has never heard of Jesus.

4. The Gospel of Matthew.

It was believed in the early centuries that Matthew wrote the Gospel bearing his name, and wrote it in Hebrew (Aramaic); but the book itself bears witness to the contrary. A translation, no matter how well done, can always be detected by the influence of the original on the translator's vocabulary and style; yet nothing in our Gospel of Matthew smacks of Aramaic. Moreover, there is incorporated in Matthew almost the whole of Mark with its Greek reproduced at times most minutely; such reproduction would be impossible if Matthew had been written in Aramaic and then put into Greek. As for its authorship, the use of Mark as one main source is strongly against the theory that the apostle Matthew was the author; an apostle would hardly thus base his own record of Jesus upon what a Christian of the second generation had written, even if the latter did have Peter as his authority. The tradition of a Hebrew original and of Matthew's authorship may have arisen from what Papias states

about the Logia; nevertheless, it is so well established that there would seem to be some measure of truth in it. Perhaps someone who had Matthew's Logia, either in Aramaic or already translated into Greek, came across Mark's Gospel, and conceived the happy idea of combining the two in one, thus joining the words of Jesus with the deeds of Jesus. He copied Mark with much freedom, having himself a knowledge of the Oral Gospel which lies behind it; and he added various matters, such as the birth of Jesus and sundry deeds of Peter, which he had gained from other sources, in all less than one eighth of the whole. While in general he followed Mark's order, he was fond of grouping by topics; and he kept Matthew's Sayings of Jesus together in long passages, such as the one we call the Sermon on the Mount. When it was completed, the book bore the name of Matthew because it was considered simply an enlargement of his Logia. Who the compiler was, cannot be known. Of course it is not impossible that Matthew himself was the man; but far more probably it was some Christian Jew living not far from Palestine, possibly in Antioch.

The Gospel of Matthew belongs to the little group of New Testament books prepared specially for Jewish Christians. Many things reveal this:—its numerous quotations from the Old Testament, its pains to point out fulfilment of prophecy, its view of the Law as not destroyed but completed by Jesus, and especially the evident purpose of the writer to show that Jesus is the long-expected Messiah and His Kingdom is the true Messianic Kingdom, which He offered to the Jews, who rejected both it and Him, and for this reason have now as a nation been rejected while the Kingdom is offered to the whole world. Mark is an unstudied re-

cital of precious reminiscences to make men see Jesus as men saw Him in His public ministry. Matthew is a presentation of the facts of Jesus' life to bring out clearly His Messiahship; it is an argument as much as a narrative, and, like the Epistle to Hebrews, was prepared for those who were tempted to give up their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Such strengthening of faith by a special survey of the life and words of their Lord was greatly needed by wavering Jewish Christians in the excitement preceding and during the revolt against Rome, when every Jewish heart was filled with hopes of a political kingdom, and again in the somber days immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, when the mystery of God's dealings with His chosen people lay like a pall upon every son of Israel, even the Christian Jew. We may, therefore, with some confidence date the book not long before or after 70 A.D. when, as certain passages indicate, the tragic events in Palestine were considered by the writer to be the immediate preliminaries to the coming of Christ. Though written by a Jewish Christian, the Gospel of Matthew, by its catholic spirit, its emphasis of the teachings of Jesus, its logical arrangement of contents, and its place at the beginning of the New Testament, has gained more readers than any other gospel, thus making it "the most important book in the world."

5. The Gospel of Luke.

The Gospel of Luke is unquestionably by the same author as the Book of Acts; and the proofs that this author was "the beloved physician" and companion of Paul, have already been considered. The purpose of the book is plainly stated in its preface:—that Theophilus may be assured of the Christian facts pre-

viously learned by him from the lips of others. Many are undertaking to write a life of Jesus, and Luke is stirred up by their example to do the same, being particularly fitted for the task by special opportunities to gain information and by unusual industry in research (1:1-4). His main sources prove to be the Logia and Mark,—the same as those the author of Matthew used; but he has collected much additional information. In his travels with Paul he would often meet men who had been with Jesus, and would seize the opportunity to question them. His account of the birth and childhood seems based on some Aramaic document which he may have obtained at Jerusalem. He attempts to arrange his material in chronological order, breaking up the Logia so as to put the words of Jesus in their original setting; but he has little to guide him except Mark's order, and much of his original material he puts together in one long passage (9:51-18:14) with the vague statement that the time was when Jesus was journeying toward Jerusalem (9:51; 13:22; 17:11). A chronology of the life of Christ was as impossible for him as for those who attempt it to-day. The Gospel of Luke, then, is a history of Jesus, written with full sympathy and much literary ability by an educated Gentile Christian, an historian by nature, who, though not himself a witness of what he narrates, was for years intimately among those who had been witnesses.

Luke as a Gentile wrote for his Gentile brethren, Theophilus, who may have been a Roman knight, and others. He substitutes Gentile terms for Jewish, e.g., master or teacher for rabbi, the Skull for Golgotha, Zealot for Cananaean; he calls the little sheet of water in Galilee a lake and not a sea; he explains that the

Passover is the feast of unleavened bread and that Capernaum is a city of Galilee and Arimathea a city of the Jews. That Italian readers are specially in his thought is shown in Acts by his taking for granted that they will know just where The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns are, though he carefully states the location of the Mount of Olives (Acts 28:15; 1:12). There is a catholicity of spirit in this Gospel which makes it peculiarly attractive. As the genealogy of Jesus is carried back to Adam instead of begun with Abraham, so He is set forth as the Saviour of all,—Samaritans, Gentiles, publicans, outcasts,—as well as of Jews. There is a marked interest in women and home life, and frequent emphasis of prayer by both the example and the teachings of Jesus. All this makes Luke "the most beautiful book ever written" (Renan). The attitude of the writer towards Jesus and the apostles is that of a Christian of the second generation. More even than in Matthew all details are omitted that might be thought inconsistent with Jesus' sinlessness and full divinity, e.g., His violence in cleansing the temple, His overpowering sorrow in Gethsemane (later copyists inserted 22:43-44), His cry of seeming despair on the cross, and such emotions as anger and grief and curiosity. There is similar omission of matters discreditable to the apostles:—the rebuke of Peter, the censure of the Twelve, the ambitious request of James and John, the flight at Jesus' arrest; also the denial by Peter and the rebuke to the Twelve at the Lake (22:54 f.; 8:25) are softened down, and excuses are made for acts by them that might be censured (22:45; 9:33). It is the first step in the long process by which the apostles came to be represented as ideal men, and the human side of Jesus

was so completely hidden that worshippers craving understanding and pity turned to the virgin mother instead of to her Son.

As for the time when Luke was written, it seems certainly to have been after the fall of Jerusalem; such a passage as 21: 20-24, when compared with the parallel passage in Mark, shows that the prophecy of Jesus had received interpretation from the event itself. If the date of Acts could be exactly determined, we would, of course, set the date of the Gospel not long before it. As a likely guess we may fix upon somewhere about 75 A.D.

6. The Discarded Gospels.

Luke prefaces his Gospel with the statement that many others have undertaken the task he sets before himself. A sudden wave of activity in putting the story of Jesus into permanent written form seems to have swept across the church in the third quarter of the century. We can easily understand how it arose. Jesus had not yet returned, and the conviction was becoming strong that He would not soon return. As expectation grew less, the value of recollection increased; each act and word of the Lord when on earth seemed more important. Perhaps, too, the consciousness of His immediate, spiritual presence was somewhat dulled, and the guidance of His words was sought to supplement the guidance of His Spirit. But the eye-witnesses were passing away; and there was danger that their story would be distorted or forgotten. So men hastened to write it down as they had received it directly or indirectly from their lips. How many gospels came into existence during this period, we do not know. Some of them probably were only brief out-

lines, or dealt with special incidents in the life of Jesus; others may have been as full as the Gospel of Mark. The names of a few have been preserved through references to them or even brief quotations from them by early writers; but none ever gained general recognition by the church. One hundred years later Tatian used only the four canonical gospels when he compiled his life of Christ; and Irenaeus argued gravely that from the very nature of things there could and should be four and only four.

Why did the church thus discard these other gospels after brief use of them? Undoubtedly because they were less satisfactory, that is, less full or less trustworthy than our four. What Theophilus and all others sought from a gospel was to know the certainty concerning the things wherein they had been taught by word of mouth (Lk. 1:4). The written story was placed in the hands of those who already had heard the oral story, and was circulated while many still lived who, from immediate acquaintance with the apostles or even with Jesus Himself, could test its accuracy. Unless it received the hearty endorsement of such critics, it would be thrown aside when a more reliable gospel could be procured. Through such a sifting process our four gospels alone remain as those that received the endorsement of the church,—an endorsement that is the highest proof of their trustworthiness.

XVIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT

EVERYTHING in the Book of Acts indicates that during the first half of the Apostolic Age the Roman government was not hostile to Christianity. There are persecutions by Jews and ill-treatment by Gentiles; but whenever a Christian is brought before a Roman official he is dealt with justly, though somewhat contemptuously. To be sure, one purpose of the Book of Acts, so scholars say, is to recommend Christianity to the Roman government by pointing out that in the beginning it was favourably regarded by Roman courts and magistrates; so only instances of favour may have been recorded. But Paul's letters corroborate Acts. The apostle is confident that if the brethren lead a good life and obey the rulers, they have nothing to fear (Rom. 13:1-7). And certainly as long as the Christians were supposed to be simply one Jewish sect, they would not suffer for their religion, since Judaism was allowed special privileges and exemption from governmental control.

1. The Persecution by Nero.

Though the Christians were sheltered under the rights granted to the Jews, popular prejudice against them was strong. Christianity caused trouble wherever it came. It broke up households, even as Jesus had foretold (Matt. 10:35 f.); it caused loss of profits to traders and craftsmen connected with the temples; it

shut its followers away from the social life as well as from the licentious or cruel amusements of their neighbours; and it seemed to the educated a degrading and destructive superstition. As has been the case in later days, Christian meetings for worship and the celebration of the Lord's Supper were grossly misunderstood. Held as they usually had to be at night, with the two sexes together, they were supposed to be carnivals of lust; and from garbled words about the mystic body and blood of Christ, it was inferred that human sacrifices and cannibalism added horror to the scene. If the Jews were disliked, the Christians were detested by their heathen neighbours. Conditions were ripe for an outbreak against them. Still no one could dream that the storm would burst so suddenly and violently.

In July, 64 A.D. a terrible conflagration lasting for days destroyed the greater part of Rome. The people suspected Nero of causing the fire that he might revel in the wild scenes of its flames and the misery of the flying citizens. or glorify himself by building a new city upon the ashes of the old. To avert this suspicion he proclaimed the Christians to be the incendiaries. And since they were generally despised, mostly poor, without protectors, and supposed to lead infamous lives, it was easy to fix the charge of arson upon them though direct evidence was lacking. Indeed, the Roman populace was ready to join with Nero in any action against Christians because of the general belief that, as Tacitus phrased it, they were "haters of mankind." The persecution which followed was savage to an almost incredible degree. Not simply were Christians put to death, regardless of sex and age, but, as the sober Roman historian tells us, "they were also made the subjects of sport in their death, for they were covered with the

hides of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set on fire; and when day declined they were burned to serve as torches by night." This excess of cruelty finally caused a revolt in popular feeling, and had to be stopped because the people began to sympathize with the victims. Yet the brand of infamy which had been thus publicly put upon the followers of Jesus remained, and they were increasingly regarded as "the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things." Any charge against them would be plausible, and any punishment would not be thought too severe. Henceforth, though not always persecuted, they lived under the shadow of persecution.

2. The Later Persecutions.

During the troubled days that followed Nero's death until Vespasian was fairly established upon the throne, little attention could be paid to the Christians. Later on, when action was taken concerning them, two causes combined to make that action hostile. One was, as we have said, the opinion that they were a worthless, vicious class whose presence poisoned the people,—to get rid of them would be for the public benefit. The other was the fact that they were an independent organization with their Great Head, their own officials and laws, and a close connection with one another throughout the empire. This was illegal and dangerous; they must be suppressed. No general edict to that effect was issued; but rescripts were sent to the governors of different provinces directing them to watch the disloyal sect, and deal with its members, if need be, severely. In proportion as an emperor was active in looking after the interests of the empire, he strove to exterminate the Christians, thus causing the seeming

paradox that the best emperors were the bitterest persecutors. The character of a provincial governor and the degree of popular hatred of Christians in his province, would largely determine local measures against them; but we may be sure that nowhere was an open follower of Jesus free from danger of cruel treatment.

A greater cause of suffering, and one directly connected with religion, came from refusal to join in worship of the emperor. Other men could add this worship to their own cults; Christians could not. Emperor worship had its roots in the primitive belief that great men are in some way divine; but its rapid development during the first century came from an increasing desire for a deity more real than the gods who were vanishing in the mists of scepticism, and for a religion that would serve as a common bond throughout the Roman world. The emperor was the incarnation of the immeasurable and beneficent forces of Rome, and to pay him divine honours was a natural impulse. We see the same feeling active in Japan to-day. The rulers at first did not specially seek such worship of themselves in their lifetime, preferring to wait until death before they joined the ranks of the gods; rather it was forced upon them by enthusiastic provincials in the East, and accepted by them because it nourished patriotism and served to bind the empire together. Temples sprang up in all the large cities, especially in Asia; and the Caesar-cult was rapidly organized and developed. Participation in the worship was not compulsory:—Jews and Christians could refuse to join in it, though at the cost of seeming to be unpatriotic. Increasing familiarity with the ascription of deity to themselves presently made the emperors ready to believe that they were indeed divine. Forced to play the part of God, they

ended by demanding this exalted position. Caligula, who caused the Jews much difficulty by insisting that his statue should be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, was, to be sure, half crazy: but Domitian, a savage and jealous ruler, loved to be called Lord and God (*dominus et deus*), and made a sober and strenuous attempt to force the worship of himself upon all except the Jews. This brought sore trouble to the Christians. To worship was to deny their Lord; to refuse was to insult the emperor and brand themselves as traitors to the state with death as the penalty. Nor was it easy to avoid these alternatives; enemies were ever watching and eager to inform against them, and when they were brought before the courts the examination was most searching. The process of trial followed by Pliny when he was governor of Bythinia (112 A.D.), had probably developed much earlier. He states in a letter to Trajan that when those who were brought before him as Christians persisted in confessing Christ, though repeatedly threatened with capital punishment, he put them to death or, if they were Roman citizens, sent them to Rome for trial. Certain of the accused "declared that they were not Christians then and never had been; and they repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered worship with wine and incense to your image which, for this purpose, I had ordered to be brought with the images of the deities; and they likewise reviled Christ; none of which things, I am told, a real Christian can ever be made to do. On this account I dismissed them. Others named by an informer, first affirmed and then denied the charge of Christianity, declaring that they had been Christians but had ceased to be so some three years ago, others still longer, some twenty years ago. All of them worshiped your image

and the statues of the gods, and also reviled Christ." Evidently when a Christian was accused of rejecting emperor worship, his blameless life and his care in observing the laws, would be of no avail in clearing him. He would suffer, not as an evil-doer but as a Christian (I Peter 4:16); and nothing but denying the name would save him.

From the days of Nero the shadows of persecution were ever growing darker, but the fierce tempest did not break until the century neared its close. We have no clear record of severe governmental action against the Christians during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, though there are hints of outbreaks against them in various localities, and of suffering even unto death as a Christian. But under Domitian, the definite imperial policy was to crush out the hated sect, and this resulted in a bitter persecution shortly before the end of his reign. No historian has recorded the sufferings of those days; but imagination can easily picture the steadily increasing pressure of measures to make followers of Christ renounce Him, the consternation when this developed into outright persecution, the dismay as persecution grew more and more severe, the sifting-out of the half-hearted, the heroic endurance even unto death of the faithful, the mingled sorrow and rejoicing over the growing number of martyrs, and the dread anticipation of what the powers of evil had still in store. And such use of the imagination to reconstruct the lives of the Christians under Vespasian and Domitian is helpful and almost necessary for a full appreciation of the Christian writings produced in that period.

3. The Later Years of Peter.

Though Peter stands out as the leading apostle in

the Gospels and the first half of the Book of Acts, he is largely lost to sight later on. The headship of the church in Jerusalem passed from him to James the Just, possibly because Peter was increasingly away from the city, and also because of his favouring attitude towards the Gentiles, beginning with his visit to Cornelius. He is not mentioned in connection with Paul's final visit to Jerusalem; and he seems to have spent his last years outside of Palestine. Though at first he might work among only the Jews of the Dispersion (Gal. 2:7-8), his attitude towards the Gentiles (Acts 15:7-11) would lead him like Paul to offer the gospel to all. On his missionary tours his wife accompanied him, and tradition says that Mark went as his interpreter (I Cor. 9:5; I Peter 5:13). We know that he visited Antioch (Gal. 2:11); and though from this visit may have arisen the early belief that he was the first bishop of that church, it is very probable that after leaving Jerusalem he made his headquarters there. A party in Corinth took his name (I Cor. 1:12); but this does not prove that he ever laboured in that city. The First Epistle of Peter is addressed to the sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bythinia; and even if it should be denied that he wrote that epistle, the inference is probably correct that he laboured in those regions. He doubtless died as a martyr; so Clement expressly says, and tradition uniformly affirms. John 21:18-19 is further testimony to this fact, as it is evidently an interpretation of the prophecy of Jesus after the event. Tradition agrees also that his martyrdom was in Rome. Some Protestants, in their eagerness to disprove the Pope's claim to be the lineal successor of Peter, have denied that Peter ever was at Rome; but this is a wilful refusal to

weigh evidence. We may not believe that he founded the church at Rome,—the silence of Acts and of Paul's letters written to or in Rome is plainly against it; but the traditions that link Peter with Rome are so early and so strong that scholars generally agree he came and died there. Whether his death was as early as the time of Nero is more doubtful. Tradition affirms it, but there was a natural inclination to assign all deaths by martyrdom to the time either of Nero or of Domitian, the two well-known periods of persecution. Another tradition declares that he lived in Rome twenty-five years; and while such a long stay is barely credible, the story could hardly have arisen if he died as early as the days of Nero. Some beautiful legends have clustered around his last hours; but the time, place, and circumstances of his death are veiled from us. And whether we have any further items of his history depends upon whether he was the author of the epistles that bear his name.

4. The First Epistle of Peter.

The letter is declared to be written by Peter (1:1) from Babylon (5:13)—probably a cryptic name for Rome,—to Christians in Asia Minor (1:1-2) who are suffering persecution (1:6; 4:12 f.). The amanuensis is Silvanus (Silas), and greetings are sent by Mark (5:12-13),—the former possibly and the latter probably Paul's companion. The author evidently is familiar with the Epistle of James, and seems to have known Romans and Ephesians also; though the resemblances may have sprung from common Christian thought. All this is consistent with the little we know about the later days of Peter; and in the early centuries there was no question as to his authorship. Recent writers have questioned it, and seek to disprove it

by showing that the epistle does not correspond to what in their opinion Peter would have written. Their objection that a Galilean fisherman could not have written such good Greek is easily met by giving credit for the language and style of the epistle to Silvanus. They say also that Peter would not have addressed churches in Paul's field. But most of the provinces mentioned in the address were not in Paul's field; nor is there evidence that Peter would hesitate to write a letter of encouragement to Paul's churches, especially if Paul were now dead. The letter seems to be written to Gentiles (2:10; 4:2-3) or more likely to Christians generally,—the term, "sojourners of the Dispersion," being used figuratively (1:17; 2:11); and it is argued that Peter would confine himself to Jewish Christians. But the old division of work (Gal. 2:9) can hardly have been observed through the decades (it was not by Paul); and after the Jewish war it certainly must have been ignored by anyone who worked outside of Palestine. The Pauline theology of the letter is said to indicate that Peter could not have written it. But, as the gospels show, Peter did not have an independent mind; and we have seen that at Antioch and the Jerusalem council he was deeply influenced by Paul. Moreover, in the opinion of other scholars the theology of the epistle is not so much that of Paul as of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The silence about Jesus' earthly life, which is urged against the apostolic authorship of this and the epistles of James and John, is after all not remarkable. If the consciousness of the immediate presence of Christ was strong, and the emphasis of His risen power and glory was constant, why should an apostle look back to the days of the earthly ministry for guidance or inspiration? Yet the example of Jesus in bearing persecu-

tion is held before the readers (2:21 f.; 3:18; 4:1, 13); and there is the plain statement that the writer was an eye-witness of His sufferings (5:1). If the epistle was not by Peter, either it was by a forger who would have taken more pains to emphasize Petrine authorship, or it was anonymous, in which case the later assignment would have been rather to Paul than to Peter.

There is little to indicate the date. If Peter was the author and was put to death by Nero, it was before 68 A.D. But the spread and organization of churches through Asia Minor, and what seems the beginning of governmental persecution (3:16; 5:8-9), cause many scholars to believe that the epistle was written not before 75 A.D. The tone of the writer is that of an old man who looks upon life as a pilgrimage full of suffering, and who in a fatherly way exhorts his readers to be patient, humble and hopeful. It is a new and strange thing, this fiery trial which is in their midst; and he still hopes that by well-doing they may escape its severity; but if the mere fact that they bear the name Christian is to bring condemnation, let them glorify God in this name, and rejoice that they share Christ's sufferings. "The temper inculcated by Peter in view of suffering is not a grey, close-lipped stoicism, but a glow of exultation such as Jesus (Matt. 5:11-12) and Paul (Rom. 5:3) had already counselled. Christians can be patient under trials only by being more than patient" (Moffatt). And to sustain such a spirit of rejoicing in tribulation the readers are pointed to the eternal glory that lies beyond. The key-note of the epistle is hope. Peter has been called the apostle of hope, as James of works, Paul of faith, and John of love.

The epistle admits of no sharp analysis; like James

the train of thought is conversational rather than logical. After a salutation which outlines the thoughts that follow (1:1-2), the salvation of God is held up as a living hope for the future (3-5), an unutterable joy in the present (6-9), and a subject of earnest study by the prophets in the past (10-12). The life in expectation of the coming of Christ must be one of holiness (13-16), godly fear (17-21), and brotherly love (22-25). Those who have entered upon it should seek to grow as babes in Christ (2:1-2), and to be living stones and a holy priesthood in God's spiritual temple (4-10). They are exhorted to avoid fleshly lusts and all appearance of evil, that the slanders against them may be stopped, and the slanderers may "glorify God," i.e., be converted (11-12). As subjects, Christians must obey the civil authorities (13-17); as servants, they must be obedient to their masters, even to surly ones who inflict punishment wrongfully, for thus Christ suffered and left an example (18-25); as wives, they must be in subjection to their husbands even to those who are not Christians, hoping by silent influence and chaste behaviour to win them to Christ (3:1-6); as husbands, they must be considerate and appreciative of their wives (7); and as neighbours they must display the Christian graces, since by blessing others they will themselves gain a blessing (8-13).

The epistle then passes on to the dominant subject of suffering for righteousness' sake. The blessedness of such suffering as a part of the life in Christ, is set forth in a passage wherein an allusion to His preaching unto "the spirits in prison" has caused much discussion, and given rise to the mediaeval idea of the harrying of hell (3:14-22). Suffering when Christlike is a proof that, like Christ, the sufferers refuse to share in

the sinful life of the world, and live according to the will of God (4:1-6). Such a life is enjoined that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ (7-11). In the fiery trial there is a double joy, that of sharing Christ's sufferings and that of exulting in the revelation of His glory (12-16). And suffering is a testing which only the righteous can endure (17-19). The elders are exhorted to be faithful in their oversight of the flock (5:1-4); and the younger Christians, to be subject to them and with humility to serve one another, casting their cares upon God who will Himself perfect, establish and strengthen (5-11). The letter closes with a few salutations and a benediction of peace (12-14).

5. The Second Epistle of Peter.

The epistle that bears this title is mentioned by no writer before the third century, and was the last of all the books to gain a place in the New Testament. The indications that it was not written by Peter are many. It speaks of "the fathers" and "your apostles," as if they belonged to an earlier day (3:2-4); it shows that Paul's epistles are now collected and treated as inspired (3:15-16); and it takes nearly half its contents (2:1-3:7) from the Epistle of Jude. That Second Peter does borrow from Jude, and not the reverse seems unmistakable. Jude is brief, strong, symmetrical; to enlarge and dilute it would be an easy task; but to take the corresponding passage in Peter and condense it, retaining the unusual words, bringing together scattered ideas, and making all harmonious, would be exceeding difficult. Also, to understand some passages in Peter we have to go back to Jude, and see how the words originally stood before they were torn apart and given

a new context (cf. II Peter 2:11-12; Jude 9-10). That the apostle Peter would thus borrow from Jude is improbable, even as that he should give such an injunction as 3:2. On the other hand, if the epistle is not by Peter, it is a deliberate forgery; for it professes throughout to be by him. But a forger would take pains to imitate more carefully the First Epistle of Peter, especially in such a matter as the name and title of the writer or as the benediction. And there are many things in the opening chapter and the close of the epistle that suit the apostle and harmonize with First Peter:— enough so that the apostolic authorship, including Peter's appropriation of Jude's epistle, is still maintained by some able scholars.

An attempt to reconcile the conflicting indications of authorship deserves consideration. It supposes that Peter wrote a brief letter encouraging the church about the delay of Christ's coming. In this letter he promised his readers to put them in remembrance, and stir them up from time to time (II Peter 1:12-13). A later writer, noting this promise and thinking that the warnings of Jude were such a message as Peter would give in the then conditions (3:1), took the little letter of Peter and incorporated Jude in it, omitting the quotations from the apocalypses, and changing the tense from present to future that they might suit the professedly earlier date; and then sent it to the churches he felt needed such warning and encouragement. Naturally in amplifying Jude he made it more Petrine in tone and phraseology; and he may also have remodelled Peter's letter by adding profitable suggestions as, for example, the one about Paul's epistles (3:15-16). The original letter of Peter would be the first chapter and portions of the last chapter in the present epistle.

Apparently the question of authorship must remain unsettled, thus leaving the book in much the same position as the Pastoral Epistles and Hebrews. The right of any book to a place in the New Testament depends not upon who wrote it, but upon what it contains. The words of an apostle have no authority, save as they are the words of the Holy Spirit. Suppose, and it is not impossible, that there should be discovered to-day one of the lost letters of Paul. Would the mere fact that he wrote it, make us add it to the list of inspired scriptures? But in the case of the present epistle, the uncertainty as to its author, while not affecting its authority, does leave us in perplexity as to its date. If Peter wrote it, we can place it not long after his first epistle. If he did not, then the date must be after that of Jude, and may be even after the end of the century, making this the latest of the New Testament books.

The opening chapter is a general exhortation to make progress in Christian virtues, together with an emphasis of Peter's knowledge and authority. Jude's denunciation of the false teachers is next repeated; but they are denounced not so much for their licentious, greedy lives as for their denial of the coming of Christ, in which they evidently have used some of Paul's teachings,—perhaps II Thess. 2:1 f. In Jude there is a desire to save these scoffers, if possible; but the present epistle has nothing but condemnation. Then follows the explanation that the Day of the Lord is delayed through God's merciful desire that all should first repent; and the assurance that it certainly will come, destroying the present heavens and earth, and making all things new. The closing exhortation is to watchfulness and diligence.

XIX

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

THE Revelation, or Apocalypse, of John is confessedly a puzzling book. We must suppose that the original readers understood it; yet as early as the fourth century Jerome cried out that it contained as many mysteries as words. Fanatics used it then, as they have ever since, in support of strange and unwholesome doctrines, thus bringing it into disrepute and causing much dispute over its right to a place among inspired writings. It has been endlessly discussed and variously interpreted by the few for whom its very obscurity has a fascination, and unduly neglected, save as regards certain familiar passages, by the great majority of Bible students. Just at present it is receiving special attention, both because scholars believe that they have found new light upon its meaning, and because ordinary readers feel that its messages in some way have gained fresh power from the Great War. Yet it still remains the most enigmatic book in the New Testament. Unquestionably it was born from the struggle between the church and the Roman government; and for that reason we take it up at this point in our narrative.

1. The Problems of the Book.

The questions about the Apocalypse that call for an answer are many; but we are concerned chiefly with two,—Who wrote it? and What does it mean? The author was John; but was he the apostle, or the pres-

byter John mentioned by Papias, or some unknown Christian bearing that not uncommon name? This can better be discussed later on when we deal with the other writings ascribed to the apostle John. The meaning of the book is the more difficult and important problem. Evidently in its central part it portrays by a series of visions a terrible and deadly struggle between the church and her enemies. But do the events thus symbolically and powerfully set forth belong to the writer's own age? Or are they still in the future, —at the end of the present aeon, whenever that may be? Or are some of them already behind us while others are yet to come, so that the book is a continuous history of the church's progress? Or are they in no way historical events, but vivid pictures of the unceasing warfare between good and evil principles? Each of these interpretations has had and still has its advocates; which shall we accept?

To add to our confusion, some recent writers maintain that Revelation can have no uniform interpretation, because it is made up of various small apocalypses or fragments of apocalypses, written at different times by Jewish as well as by Christian authors, each of which must be separated from the others and given an independent treatment. Concerning this theory we may say that evidently the author was a close student of the Old Testament and current apocalypses, and borrowed symbols and ideas from them, especially from the Book of Daniel; and he may even have taken whole passages from those who wrote before him,— the Old Testament prophets did not hesitate to do so. But he made his material thoroughly his own. In grammar and style and structure, all of which are unique, the book is the same throughout; and there is

an unusual unity of thought and dramatic development. To assign its several parts to different authors, or to pronounce it "a conglomerate of ill-according elements," and John merely an awkward compiler, seems absurd. Whatever else the book may be, it is "a masterpiece of literary art."

2. The Nature of an Apocalypse.

Many of the difficulties in understanding Revelation have arisen from the idea that because it foretells the future, it should be construed as an ordinary book of prophecy. But to do this is as misleading as to give one and the same interpretation to the imagery of a poet and the sober statements of a preacher. The underlying thoughts may be identical, but we must reach them in different ways. An apocalypse has its own literary characteristics as well as its own spiritual features. In former days there was excuse for not recognizing this fact; because the only apocalyptical writings in the Bible besides Revelation are the Book of Daniel and scattered passages elsewhere, and the very few other apocalypses then known were little studied. The comparatively recent discovery of further pieces of this literature, of which the Book of Enoch is chief, has enabled us to recognize more clearly its special features. The messages of the prophets, at least of the earlier ones, were delivered as public addresses, and afterwards written down; but apocalypses were never spoken and were for the closet rather than the forum. Their messages were usually put in the form of visions or dreams. Where a prophet would say, "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7), an apocalyptist would write, "I behold a whirlwind; and by it those who sowed the

wind are being swept away." How far these visions originally were real psychical experiences we cannot determine; they became the convenient and conventional form for an apocalypse. The use of symbols is another characteristic feature. It may have been caused by the need of hiding the meaning from enemies (cf. II Thess. 2:1-10), or by the impossibility of expressing in any other way the ineffable things of the vision (cf. II Cor. 12:4). The symbols often seem grotesque or monstrous, e.g., a sword coming out of a mouth, a beast with seven heads and ten horns, a city as high as it is long and broad; but this is because we, like the Greeks, insist that a symbol shall satisfy our aesthetic sense, while the Hebrews thought only of its fitness to express a religious truth. All the Jewish apocalypses were put forth as the productions of famous teachers in the remote past; e.g., Enoch, Moses, Isaiah, instead of the real authors. This was because in the age when they were written the belief was general that prophecy had ceased, and that men no longer were able to receive a direct revelation from God. The only way, therefore, to give force to a message and assert its divine origin, was to put it in the lips of some person of old who was recognized as having walked and talked with God. The fact that John, when he wrote his apocalypse, did not support it by an ancient name, is significant as showing that the consciousness of direct inspiration had once more been kindled, and men possessing it did not hesitate to say, each in his own way, "Thus saith the Lord."

An apocalypse is the product of periods of danger and suffering,—an answer to the cry of the faithful, "How long, O Lord?" It brings a message of patience, hope and cheer:—God will avenge His own

elect and speedily. But in regard to the present and the future it takes a different view from that of prophecy. It refuses to believe that present forces of good will ultimately conquer evil, and pessimistically declares that things must go from bad to worse until God directly intervenes to crush His foes. While prophecy ever urges men to work for God, apocalypse holds that all events are so divinely prearranged that men are helpless and can only wait for God. Since the future is already fixed beyond change by the divine will, it may be revealed in visions, and its exact times may be figured out; indeed, students of apocalypses are fond of such figuring. Supernatural beings,—angels and spirits of evil,—play an important part in apocalyptic visions. This was the fruit of later Jewish thought which held that God is too exalted and holy to deal directly with men, and so makes use of spiritual beings as His agents (even Paul speaks of the law being enacted through the agency of angels (Gal. 3:19), a different conception of its origin from that in Exodus), and also the fruit of contact with the Persian religion, according to which spirits of evil and darkness were ever fighting against spirits of good and light. It is in the apocalypses that we find the Messiah represented as a preexistent, heavenly being; the prophets had uniformly pictured him as a human descendant of David, divinely endowed with strength and wisdom. And the favourite title of Jesus for Himself, the Son of Man, was first used in these apocalyptic books.

The most characteristic feature of apocalypses is the conception of the world's history as sharply divided into two great ages or aeons. The first age is the one in which the writer now lives. It is an age filled with

dire calamities, both physical and spiritual. The forces of evil led by Satan seem triumphant, and the condition of the pious is one of suffering and oppression. But this age is drawing to a close. Very soon will come the final, terrible struggle between the powers of good and evil, a struggle full of supernatural actors and terrifying events. And in that hour of darkness either the Messiah will suddenly appear, or God will manifest His power in some startling way, to overwhelm all the hosts of evil and bring about their dissolution. Then the new aeon will begin,—the golden age in which all things will be marvellously transformed, sickness and suffering and death will disappear, those who fought against God will be judged and punished, while the people of God will enter into divine joys and rewards. The certainty and nearness of this glorious consummation formed the central note of hope and cheer in apocalyptic thought. Whether the new world of this coming aeon would be spiritual or earthly was problematical. On the one hand the old prophets had always promised a renewed and transformed earth, in which the soil would be marvellously fertile, Jerusalem would be built up into a wonderful city, and the chosen people would enjoy the utmost earthly felicity. On the other hand the apocalyptists loved to anticipate and portray a spiritual world with its rewards and punishments. So to harmonize these two conflicting expectations, there was sometimes pictured a millennium,—a period of a thousand years after the end of the first aeon,—during which the Kingdom of God triumphant on earth will have all the joys promised by the prophets, and at whose close will come the final judgment and the eternal, spiritual age with its bliss and woe.

3. The Occasion of Writing.

An apocalyptist like a prophet was a preacher with a message for men of his own day. When he wrote about the future, he was not aiming to gratify idle curiosity but from the future to draw helpful lessons or warnings or encouragements for the present. His teaching was suited to the needs of his readers; therefore, to understand it, we must first ascertain when and to whom he wrote. The Revelation of John, as its contents show, was put forth in an hour of sore trouble and persecution when Rome was ravaging the church and threatening death to those who would not worship the emperor. There was no longer any hope that by well-doing the government might be propitiated and Christians regain favour; instead, the war between the beast and the Lamb must be fought to a finish. In the opinion of some scholars, especially those who wrote a few decades ago, the days immediately following the death of Nero best suit the situation revealed in the book; and elaborate interpretations of the visions have been worked out from this standpoint. But neither the hostility of the Roman government, nor the development of the churches founded by Paul in Asia, could in 69 A.D. have been so far advanced as Revelation indicates. The date fixed by early tradition and accepted generally to-day is the latter part of the reign of Domitian, though with the possibility that some portions of the book may have been written in the time of Vespasian and revised when the whole was published. Undoubtedly, however, the persecution by Nero strongly shaped the writer's portrayal of persecutions yet to come; and a further background of his picture was the terrible suf-

ferings of the Jews when Antiochus Epiphanes (168 B.C.) sought to force them to deny their faith. The destruction of Jerusalem, also, may have been in his thought when he portrayed the destruction of Rome. As readers John must have had in mind more than the seven churches directly addressed. Even in Asia there were other churches,—Colosse, Troas, Hierapolis,—that might equally well be written to; and what about those in Galatia and Macedonia and Achaia? There is no reason to doubt that his message was for all his brethren, and that he selected the seven churches,—the ones, it may be, he knew best,—simply as representatives of the whole church. The number seven, as a number for sacred things, would suit this; and the several messages combine into a universal one which "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The last decade of the first century opened ominously for the Christians. Emperor worship was increasingly demanded,—the alternative being confiscation of goods, banishment, imprisonment or even death. Also, there was a widespread belief that Nero was still alive and in hiding among the Parthians, whence he would presently lead those dreaded barbarians in a campaign of vengeance upon his former empire. This fear assumed a further and more terrifying form among the Christians:—Nero was coming back, not from the Parthians but from the dead, leagued with Satan to stand at the head of all the enemies of Christ as the defiant, dreadful Antichrist. Yet, many as were the forebodings and manifestations of trouble, the church was poorly prepared to meet the gathering storm. The messages to the churches reveal that high ideals had been forgotten, false teachings were suffered or followed, lukewarmness was thought to be spiritual

peace of mind, immorality was uncondemned or even practiced. There was need of a servant of God to warn, rebuke and denounce, and also to give a message of cheer and confidence for the days of trial at hand. The church must be assured that, though at times the powers of evil seem dominant everywhere, Christ is still in the midst of His people to shield them and fight for them, and God on His throne is making the wrath of man to praise Him. Rome has surrendered her strength to Satan, and insolently exults in his service; as a judgment she shall be utterly destroyed. And the Antichrist, exalting himself above God, shall be cast down to lowest hell. In the coming struggle there will be hours of thick darkness; let them not be hours of despair. And there is in store for some a martyr's death, but also a martyr's special reward and glory. In God's sure and speedy time the day will dawn when the new heaven and the new earth shall be established, and His servants shall reign for ever and ever. Such in general is the message of John and with such a background its details should be viewed.

4. The Contents of the Book.

The Revelation of John has a title or superscription (1: 1-3) which apparently was prefixed after the book was written, and possibly by some one other than John. It assigns the revelation to Jesus, explains the way John received it, and emphasizes its importance. The address and salutation with a doxology (4-6) seem to belong specially to the messages to the seven churches. They are followed by a solemn announcement of the Lord's coming (7-8), which, like the deep note of a warning bell, commands anxious attention. Then John tells the circumstances of his vision when in

exile on Patmos, and strives to set forth in symbols the majesty of Christ whom he saw standing in the midst of the seven churches, and heard commanding him to write a message to each (9-20). These messages (2:1-3:22) have a uniform structure, viz., a command to write, a title for Christ drawn from the details of the vision and suited to what follows, a statement showing Christ's intimate knowledge of the church's condition and giving the rebuke, warning, or exhortation needed, and a promise to him that overcometh. Collectively—and they were intended to be taken in that way—they place before us the church universal in its various aspects.

Ephesus (2:1-7) is the church steadfast and orthodox but lacking in love. In the great metropolis of Asia it upholds the standards of the faith against all heretics; but in its zeal for sound doctrine, it has allowed Christian brotherly love to wane, and so is in danger of losing its place among the churches.

Smyrna (8-11) is the church bravely suffering persecutions for Christ. Evil-minded Jews have stirred up trouble; imprisonment and possible death are in the near future; but faithfulness will be rewarded with life eternal.

Pergamum (12-17) is the church steadfast among savage foes, but lacking spiritual discrimination. Loyalty to Christ in a city that took the lead in emperor worship has been maintained, though it brought martyrdom to one faithful member. But with the loyalty there has been failure to recognize licentious teachings and practices, or at least to stop their spread. This fault must be corrected, else Christ will come in judgment.

Thyatira (18-28) is the church abounding in works

of love and faith, but tolerant of evil. In a great industrial center the opportunities for Christian ministry have increasingly been used; but licentious or gnostic teachings have been allowed through the influence of an evil woman claiming to be inspired and to teach the deep things of God,—really of Satan. The impending divine punishment of her and her followers is strongly stated. Upon those who have not followed her, no other injunction is laid except to hold fast what they have until Christ comes.

Sardis (3: 1-6) is the church moribund spiritually. Most of its members have sunk to the level of their heathen neighbours, and none of its works are perfect. Unless the lost faith is regained, sudden judgment will come. As for the few who have remained undefiled, they shall walk with Christ in white, for they are worthy.

Philadelphia (7-13) is the church feeble yet fighting openly and stoutly. Like Smyrna its enemies are Jews, and the message to it contains nothing but praise. Its faithfulness will be rewarded in the impending, universal hour of trial.

Laodicea (14-22) is the church self-satisfied and apathetic. It fails to recognize its utterly wretched state, and alone of all the churches wins no word of praise. Warning, invitation and promise are extended to rouse it from the most hopeless of conditions to the most blessed of rewards.

The purely apocalyptic section of the book, the revelation of "things which must come to pass hereafter," opens with two companion visions, to which John is summoned by the voice he heard before his first vision. God is revealed as the author of all things, gloriously enthroned in heaven and surrounded

by the highest angelic beings, who render Him unceasing worship (4: 1-11). In His keeping is the record of all future events, a book or roll sealed with seven seals which, John learns with sorrow, no one is able or worthy to open (5: 1-5). The second vision is of Christ, the Lamb, through whom God's future purposes are made possible, and who alone is empowered to break the seals and open the book. The marks of His sacrificial death and the tokens of His perfect power and knowledge are evident; and when He takes the book, the angelic beings and all created things break forth into majestic hymns of adoration (6-14). As the first four seals of the book are opened successively by Him, war as conquest, war as slaughter, famine and pestilence,—symbolized by four horsemen —are sent forth upon earth (6: 1-8); the fifth seal reveals the martyrs in God's keeping, waiting the answer to their prayer that their deaths shall be avenged (9-11); and the sixth seal is followed by catastrophes in nature so great and overwhelming that men in terror believe the final day of judgment is come (12-17). All these woes are but the prelude of the dreadful catastrophes to follow when the seventh seal is opened. And to strengthen the hearts of the faithful, two visions are granted:—first, of the angelic protection God provides for His servants on earth (7: 1-8), and second, of the future blessedness of a great multitude of the redeemed praising Him in the heavenly court described before (9-17). The opening of the seventh seal is followed by ominous silence and a symbolic act declaring that the judgments about to follow are God's answers to the prayers of His saints and martyrs (8: 1-5). Then seven angels with trumpets summon these judgments, intended to produce repent-

ance. The first four blasts call forth plagues, somewhat like those of Egypt but far more dreadful, which destroy one-third of the earth, sea, fresh waters and heavenly bodies, but produce no change in the hearts of men (6-12). The fifth blast brings the first of three woes (13), causing physical suffering so intense as to make the enemies of God long to die (9: 1-12); and the second woe, following the sixth blast, ends in the death of one-third of these enemies, yet the survivors do not repent or give up idol worship (13-21).

With the seventh trumpet broader and more distant scenes are to be revealed; and John, instead of giving a message to the churches in Asia, is to "prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." This transition is introduced by the cry of a mighty angel standing on land and sea; by the unwritten utterances of the seven thunders; by the solemn announcement that there shall be delay no longer in finishing the mystery of God; and by the bestowal upon John of a new message and a new commission (10: 1-11). At this point comes a prophecy, seemingly independent and perhaps constructed from older material (11: 1-13). Among the various interpretations of it, the simplest is that it deals with the future of the Jews, and repeats in a different form what Paul states in Romans:—that despite their unbelief, God has not cast off His chosen people; already a remnant is saved, and before the end of the world the rest shall obtain mercy. It was natural that John, when about to picture the final overthrow of the powers of evil, should pause to set forth an event which all Christians believed would closely precede it. The Jews are symbolized by the city of Jerusalem, in which the inner courts of the temple—the faithful

remnant—are under divine care and seclusion while all the rest is trampled by the Gentiles. Two faithful witnesses, the law and the prophets, are to bear their testimony throughout the period of desecration until the Antichrist kills them, much to the joy of those whom their words had tormented. But after a short time they will revive and ascend to heaven. This and a judgment destroying one tenth of the city will cause such fear that those who survive will turn to the God of heaven.

The seventh angel now sounds his trumpet, introducing the third woe; and, in anticipation of the final establishment of the Kingdom of God, a chorus of thanksgiving arises in heaven (14-19). Before describing the great conflict just at hand, John sets forth the actors in it. The powers of evil are a great dragon, Satan, furious because of his overthrow in heaven, and seeking vainly to destroy the Messiah and, when thwarted, His church (12: 1-17); a monstrous beast out of the sea, the Roman government, acting as the agent of Satan in ruling the world and in warring against the saints (13: 1-10); and another beast (later called the false prophet) from the land, the imperial priesthood, gaining authority from the first beast and compelling men by false miracles and force to join in emperor worship (11-18). Opposed to these is the Lamb with the whole body of the redeemed, who form His escort and rejoice in the presence of God (14: 1-5). The impending conflict is heralded by a series of angelic messengers and heavenly voices, announcing its various events (6-20); and an anticipatory vision is granted of the victors in heaven singing a song of triumph and adoration (15: 1-4). Seven resplendent angels now receive bowls filled with the wrath of God,

the third woe, and pour them upon the earth, sea, fresh waters, sun, throne of the beast, Euphrates and air (15:5-16:21). The plagues produced in this way are similar to those called forth by the trumpets, but far more dreadful and purely punitive. They culminate in the destruction of the city and dominion of Rome, leaving the field free for the war of the great day of God against the hosts of Antichrist which have been gathered together in Harmagedon.

The overthrow of Rome is too important to be dismissed with a single verse; so John goes on to describe it at length with new imagery. A harlot is seen, gorgeously attired and sitting upon a beast which has seven heads and ten horns (17:1-6); and an angel explains, though in veiled terms, that the harlot is the great city of Rome, the beast is the imperial power, its seven heads are Roman emperors, and its ten horns are the provincial rulers or powers. And he predicts that the beast, transformed into a human ruler that was and is and is yet to come (Nero *redevivus?*) shall as Antichrist join with the ten horns in destroying the harlot (17:7-18). Then in a passage of intense power, similar to Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre, the destruction of the city is announced and described (18:1-24); and the great hallelujah chorus is heard, which in heaven celebrates this judgment of God and the perfect union of the Lamb with His bride, the Church (19:1-10).

The Messiah Himself, equipped for certain victory, now comes forth with the armies of heaven to confront the powers of evil; and in the battle of Harmagedon overcomes the beast and the false prophet, who are cast into the lake of fire, and slays all their followers, making their flesh food for the birds of the air (11-21).

The dragon, Satan, is bound and shut up in the abyss for a thousand years, during which time the martyrs and confessors, raised from the dead, live and reign with Christ in a world of peace and holiness (20: 1-6). At the close of the millennium Satan is to be loosed and allowed to assail the saints; but fire from heaven will destroy his followers, and he will be cast into the lake of fire forever (7-10). Three glorious visions conclude the apocalyptic portion of the book:—the Judge upon the great white throne with all the dead standing before Him to receive according to their works (11-15); the new heaven and new earth, free from all sin and impurity (21: 1-8); and the new Jerusalem, glorious and having the throne of God and the Lamb (21: 9-22: 5). The concluding passages emphasize the trustworthiness of the prophecy of the book, and the imminence of its fulfilment (22: 6-21).

Such is the book that strengthened Christian readers to meet a storm of persecution in the days of Diocletian, and has done the same many a time since. Yet in the search for its meaning it has called forth more commentaries and occupied more erratic minds than any other book of the Bible. Its revelation is of "the things which must shortly come to pass" (22: 6); and those who are eager to know times and seasons, seek for them in the present and the future because they did not come to pass in the past. But is fulfilment the sure and only test that a prediction is inspired of God? If so, the later Old Testament prophets would have been forced to pronounce their predecessors false. So long as human hearts have power to repent, and human wills can change the course of history, all predictions must perforce be conditional. Nineveh or Rome will perish or endure ac-

cording to the word of the Lord; but that word is "I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life that thou mayest live" (Deut. 30:19). Until the choice is made, the future hangs in the balance. What the visions of John meant to him who saw and those who read at the beginning, we can only conjecture; perhaps, even as now, they meant different things to different minds. Of one fact we may be sure, that then as now those who treated them as settled history of the future were entering upon a path of disappointment. But the value of the book is to be found in something far different. What is it that fills these visions with spiritual power, and makes them worthy a place in the New Testament? The strong declaration that Christ is ever in the midst of His church; that though His people pass through bitter suffering, they never pass beyond His care and sure deliverance; that above the clash of nations and the fury of human passions God on His throne is shaping all to bring about peace and righteousness; that the powers of evil shall at last be vanquished and destroyed; and that the faithful followers of Christ shall be rewarded by a heavenly life of perfect union with their Redeemer and Lord. Such a message of faith and spiritual insight has perennial force and ever-recurring timeliness. It was first given to those who were in sore trouble; and its present appeal is to hearts that are sad and anxious. "Without tears it was not written, and without tears it cannot be read."

XX

THE APOSTLE JOHN

THE history of the church has been likened to a road that, beginning in the open, soon enters a dark tunnel from which it does not emerge for some distance. This obscure period of the church's progress is from the closing years of the first century well on towards the middle of the second century. That it was a time of progress we know; for the church when it emerges from the darkness has developed in many ways, though some of its changes may be a cause for regret rather than for rejoicing. Naturally we are eager to know who were the leaders and what were the forces operative during these decades. Little can be discerned to satisfy our curiosity; the light is too dim. One figure, however, stands forth with some distinctness as the shadows gather; it is the aged apostle John, the last survivor of those who had companioned with Jesus when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Yet even upon him the shadows lie so heavy that every fact about his last days and his writings may be disputed or denied by those who are disposed so to do. There are many reasons, as we shall see, why such a disposition exists; and as a consequence, discussions are multiplied interminably. To note them is necessary, but to join in them at any length is not our purpose.

1. The Labours of John.

From the Book of Acts we gain but two items concerning the labours of John:—he shares with Peter the

miracle of healing the lame man at the temple gate, followed by imprisonment and examination before the Sanhedrin (3:1-4:31); and some time later he goes on a preaching tour through Samaria with Peter (8:14-25). He seems to have made Jerusalem his home for many years. Paul tells us that the three "pillars" of the church there, with whom he discussed the case of Titus, were James, Peter and John (Gal. 2:9). The name of John is put last in this statement, even as it is always put second when joined with Peter or James the apostle. The position indicates the place John chose for himself. Though belonging to the innermost circle of Jesus' disciples, his disposition was to assist rather than to dominate. He did once join in asking the chief seats for himself and his brother, but his mother's ambition rather than his own seems to have prompted the request (Matt. 20:20). There were fiery passions slumbering in his bosom, which might make him a Boanerges, "Son of thunder" (Mark 3:17); but what would arouse them was an insult to his Master and not to himself (Luke 9:51 f.). Gentle yet strong, sympathetic but uncompromising with evil, contemplative though energetic when in action, loving and beloved, pure in heart and blessed with the vision of God,—such was the apostle John.

Irenaeus says that John lived in Ephesus down to the time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.); and Irenaeus ought to know, since he was a pupil of Polycarp who in turn was a pupil of John. Polycrates, too, a bishop of Ephesus shortly before 200 A.D., says that John died and was buried there. He must have left Jerusalem before its mad revolt against Rome; indeed, no mention is made of his being there when Paul made his last visit. Ephesus was a center where leading Christian workers

("great luminaries," Polycrates calls them) gathered after Jerusalem was destroyed, and would be a suitable home for the apostle when Palestine had become impossible. Patmos, a little, rocky island some forty miles southwest from Miletus, might well be selected by the Roman ruler of Asia as a place of banishment for a leader of the Christian church whom he hesitated to put to death; and here, during the dark hours of Diocletian's persecution, if John wrote Revelation, the visions were gained which he published to cheer the hearts of his brethren. Some recent scholars reject all statements that connect John with Ephesus. They maintain that at some unknown time and place he, like his brother, was put to death by the Jews, and that the John who lived and died in Ephesus must have been another person, perhaps the one whom Papias mentions and calls John the Presbyter. The evidence for this is slight, being chiefly certain very late references to some statement by Papias linking John's death with that of his brother,—a statement that may have arisen from our Lord's prophecy concerning the two brothers (Mk. 10:39). Certainly the clear and strong testimony of Irenaeus and others in the second century is not to be overthrown by merely what a writer centuries later tells us was in a lost passage of Papias. Several charming stories are told of the apostle's last days, but we cannot discover how far they are purely legendary. The popular belief, caused by a misunderstanding of Jesus' words (John 21:22 f.), that John was to live until his Lord's return, would gain increasing credence as the apostles one after another passed away, and he still survived; and the Christians of the second generation must have looked upon him with deepening veneration and almost awe. He died a natural death, so it is said.

Thus the two brothers in different ways drank the cup of their Master,—James by an early martyrdom, and John by bearing the burdens of the church to extreme old age.

2. What Did John Write?

A gospel, three epistles and an apocalypse are assigned to the apostle John; but the gospel and the longer epistle give no author's name; the two short epistles reveal only that they were written by "the elder;" and the John who wrote the apocalypse and calls himself "your brother in Christ" (1:9), seems to claim a place among the prophets rather than among the apostles (22:9). Evidently there is opportunity for the discussion which has in recent days been carried on unceasingly over the authorship of these five books. The Fourth Gospel is the center of the debate, the other books being considered chiefly in their relation to it. The importance of determining whether that Gospel is a trustworthy record of the life of Jesus by one who stood in the closest relations to Him, justifies all the time spent in determining who wrote it. Unfortunately in the multitude of treatises upon this subject we often seem to find the spirit, not so much of the scholar seeking solely to ascertain the truth as of the advocate who, having already taken his position, emphasizes unduly every point in his favour, and minimizes all that counts against him.

Dealing first with the gospel and the three epistles, we may fairly, I think, summarize the verdict of the second and third centuries in three statements:

1. The four books are by the same author. This is evidenced by their close resemblance in vocabulary, in a style unlike that of any other New Testament book, in

key-words such as light, life, love, the world, to know and to believe, and in the leading ideas. The shorter epistles furnish little material for comparison; yet they,—especially II John,—are so much like I John that the latest commentator says, "So far as their origin is concerned, it is difficult to separate the two shorter epistles from the First" (Brooke). In the case of the Fourth Gospel and I John the similarity is so great that even those who deny the same authorship, are sure that their two authors must have been closely connected in training and thought,—were members, perhaps, of one special group at Ephesus. But it is easier to explain certain underlying differences, which these students think they find, by different themes and different moods in the same author than to suppose that two writers, no matter what their training, could be so completely each the double of the other.

2. The author was an eye-witness of the public ministry of Jesus. In I John he speaks as one of a group of such witnesses (1:1-3; 4:14); in the gospel he does the same (1:14; 19:35), and also calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20). That this beloved disciple was the author, is attested by a note appended to the gospel by certain persons who claim to know him and vouch for his trustworthiness (21:24); and the narrative throughout bears marks of having been written by one who belonged to the innermost circle of the Twelve. Nearly every chapter has some incidental touch which only an eye-witness and participant would give; to point these out would be almost to write a commentary on the book. A modern novelist, professing to write personal reminiscences, might take pains to put in such touches; a writer of fiction in the second century would never

think to do so; and even the modern novelist would find his skill taxed to supply such delicate and seemingly unconscious indications of the writer's undeclared participation in what he narrates.

3. The author was no other than the apostle John. Despite the anonymous form of the First Epistle, there never was any doubt in the early church that John wrote it. The epistle seems to have been widely circulated, and everywhere received by scholars and by all Christians as the message of the apostle. That the writer of II John and III John should call himself "the elder," and be defied by Diotrophes, caused some debate in the third century over their authorship; but this was because by that time the apostles were held in such reverence that it seemed unnatural for them not to claim apostolic rank and power at all times. We know that the term "the elders," was used early in the second century, not only as an official title, but also as a designation of the men of the previous generation who had been leaders in the church. Perhaps John called himself "the elder," as being the last of this group; but he may have used the term in self-abnegation, as he did "the disciple whom Jesus loved," showing by these that he sought no authority save that which comes from old age, and put forth no other claim to honour or remembrance beyond the fact that Jesus graciously bestowed His love upon him. Concerning the Fourth Gospel there was in the second century some dispute. An obscure sect, seemingly small in numbers, rejected the doctrine of the Logos set forth in it, and tried to discredit both it and Revelation by assigning them to the gnostic, Cerinthus, an opponent of John. There is some slight evidence that a few other heretics, also, rejected the Gospel. But with these exceptions heretics as well

as orthodox writers agreed that it was by the apostle. Much is sometimes made of the silence concerning this gospel in the first half of the second century; but we must bear in mind how few are the writings preserved from that period, and how naturally familiarity with the Oral Gospel or with its reproduction in the Synoptics would make men turn to that source for quotations and references, rather than to a gospel that was just getting into circulation. By the last third of the century the book was receiving the emphasis it deserved. The great scholars from that time on believed, and were sure they had good reason for believing, that the Fourth Gospel was by John the apostle, and gave the deepest, most precious revelation of his Lord. And the church throughout the later ages, despite all efforts to prove this gospel unapostolic and untrustworthy, has accepted their verdict.

The Book of Revelation, though at first accepted as from the apostle, had later on to run the gauntlet of criticism. Its marked difference in character from the other books, its enigmatic contents and the fact that fanatics used it then, as they do now, to support wild and unwholesome doctrines, made men even in the third century question its apostolic origin, thinking thereby to invalidate its inspiration. They dwelt on its evident unlikeness to the Fourth Gospel and I John, both in language and in spirit. The Greek of Revelation is by far the worst in the New Testament, full of ungrammatical constructions; while that of the other two books, though Hebraic in style, is uniformly good. And the spirit of Revelation is narrow and vindictive, lacking the universality, gentleness and love which characterize the other writings of John. The missionary spirit of Christianity finds almost no support or expression in the

book. Is it possible, these ancient critics asked, that the apostle whom Jesus loved and whose own favourite injunction, so tradition says, was "Little children, love one another," could have written such a merciless book as this? These arguments have been revived in modern days, though usually now they are directed against the apostolic authorship of the gospel. Granted, so it is said to-day, that the apostle is the John of Revelation, such marked differences prove that he could not have been the author of the Fourth Gospel. It is not easy to answer this. The difference in Greek may be accounted for by supposing either that the solecisms of the apocalypse were intentional, their object being to make the statements more unusual and impressive, or that John himself in exile and with imperfect mastery of Greek wrote the apocalypse, while for the gospel later on he had the aid of an amanuensis who expressed in correct Greek the thoughts John uttered in Aramaic, his native tongue. And concerning the difference in spirit, there are two solutions. One is that John wrote the apocalypse in middle life when the fiery spirit of a Boanerges still filled his breast, and the gospel in his old age when love had become the supreme emotion. Or, if it is recognized that the Apocalypse belongs to the time of Domitian when John was already old, then the answer is that an apocalypse from its very nature must picture the vengeance of God upon the enemies of the church,—the wrath of the Lamb; and in writing it the apostle had no opportunity or no occasion to proclaim the message of love. How successful these replies are, must be left to the opinion of each individual student. Certainly if we are forced to surrender apostolic authorship for either the gospel or the apocalypse, we would prefer to assign the latter book to John the Presbyter,

as Eusebius suggested, or to some unknown John. But how about the unquestioning ascription of it to the apostle in the second century? Copies of the book must have been sent at the very outset to the seven churches of Asia, and those who received them must have known from whom they came. To suppose that having accepted it from some other John, they presently with one accord pronounced it to be by the apostle, is to treat the Christians of that age as lacking either in ordinary intelligence or in honesty.

3. The First Epistle of John.

Is this an epistle? It has no address or salutations, no names of persons or places, no hint of destination; and yet it is personal in tone and shows evident familiarity with the spiritual condition of its readers. It may have been a circular letter meant for all the churches in Asia over which John had oversight. Certainly he had in mind a definite group of readers as he wrote. Its close connection with the Fourth Gospel makes some suppose that it was written to be sent along with that gospel, and others that it was written later to reinforce that gospel's message. Evidently its writer takes for granted that his readers know the teachings of the Fourth Gospel; but these teachings must have been promulgated orally before they were put in written form. As for its date, everything indicates that the writer was an old man, addressing believers who lived when Christian thought was fully developed. We must place it near the close of the century when John, if we suppose he was a lad in his teens during Jesus' public ministry, would be nearly ninety. It moves so entirely in the realm of the spiritual that no room is given for political events; yet the omission of any reference to

persecution seems unlikely, had Domitian then been seeking to crush out the church. The peaceful years of Nerva (96-98 A.D.) or the opening of Trajan's reign is a likely date.

What moved the aged apostle to write? He says it was his desire that his "children might have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and so their joy be made full" (1:1-3), and also that they might know that they had eternal life (5:13). He is writing to Christians of the second or third generation. "The enthusiasm of the early days of the Faith is no longer theirs. Many of them had been brought up as Christians, and did not owe their faith to strong personal conviction or experience. Their Christianity had become largely traditional, half-hearted and nominal. They found the moral obligations of their religion oppressive. The world had great attractions for them" (Brooke). As a result, while they were not unbelieving, they had no heartening assurance of truth through personal experience, such as characterized the generation to which John belonged. They failed to know that which they believed. So John, desiring to bring them to that fullness of Christian knowledge from which springs the fullness of Christian life, declares unto them the eternal truths which may be used as tests whereby they shall know that they have eternal life. The central ideas of the epistle are few in number,—righteousness, life, light and love; and concerning these John does not argue but affirm. "He had no laboured process to go through; he saw. He had no constructive proof to develop; he bore witness" (Westcott). To some readers he is monotonous and unattractive; his lack of logical order and progress in thought seems to them "the feebleness of old age."

To others he is most stimulating and impressive; and his words are like waters so clear that sometimes one fails to realize their depths.

Another evident purpose of the epistle is to combat a heresy which John calls the "anti-Christ," viz.: the denial that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh (2:22; 4:2-3). The gnostics with their doctrine that matter is evil and that sin and suffering are impossible for a divine being, refused to accept the full humanity of Jesus. Some held concerning His whole life, what some hold to-day concerning His appearances after the resurrection, that it was purely visionary:—He seemed to have a body of flesh and to suffer and die, but it was only seeming. Others distinguished, as some do to-day, between the human Jesus and the divine Christ, and maintained that the two were joined in the period only from the baptism to Gethsemane, so that it was the son of Mary and not the Son of God who lay as a babe in the manger and poured out his life upon the cross. The gnostic, Cerinthus, taught this latter view; and he and his followers, so Irenaeus says, were those against whom John was writing his denunciations, declaring that their rejection of "that which ye heard from the beginning" was a denial of the Father as well as of the Son (2:23 f.), and a rejection of the witness of God (5:10). His words come with special fitness to us in the present day. The recent centering of thought upon the human side of the life of Our Lord, which has wrought such excellent results in making Him stand out as a distinct figure moving among men of His age and shaping His life to meet their thoughts and needs, has had the unfortunate effect of creating a tendency to ignore or deny the deity in Him. Because we are so constantly exhorted to behold the Man,

we are in danger of seeing nothing else. The truths set forth by John, not for mere intellectual assent but as a motive principle of the Christian life, need renewed emphasis and constant repetition.

Anything like a formal analysis of the epistle is almost impossible. Its three great statements, God is light (1:5), God is righteous (3:7) and God is love (4:8) have been used to divide it into three main sections. Fellowship with God and man,—its conditions, dangers, character, and results,—has been suggested as the theme and its development. And there are many other attempts to find a definite order of thought in John's successive statements. But the search is for that which does not exist. The epistle is a heap of unstrung pearls which may be arranged in any order without lessening their beauty.

4. The Second and Third Epistles of John.

Letters and personal notes, carried by special messengers or by those who were journeying among the churches, must have passed frequently between the early Christians; for the age was one of correspondence, as the discovery of large numbers of letters written by all sorts of people on all sorts of occasions shows. Of such private letters by Christians, only these two, besides Philemon and Rom. XVI, remain; and their preservation was doubtless more by accident than because of their importance. Indeed, the insignificance of II and III John, quite as much as doubt about their apostolic authorship, was the cause of the hesitancy with which they were placed in the New Testament canon. Had they been allowed to perish, no doctrine of the church would have suffered; but they throw a little light on church life towards the end of the first

century, and are a precious memorial of the aged apostle.

One unsolved problem about II John is its destination. Is "the elect lady" a metaphorical term for some church whose members are her children, or does the apostle address an individual, either unnamed or called the lady Electa or the elect Kyria? Scholars by no means agree, but a church seems more probable, in which case the closing salutation is from the members of a sister church, perhaps in Ephesus. It is not likely that Gaius of III John was a member of this church of II John; for, though both letters deal with the reception and treatment of itinerant teachers, the conditions revealed in each are decidedly unlike. Yet the two are so identical in their opening and close that they must have been written at nearly the same time; and as both are merely preliminary to the coming of the writer, we may suppose them to have been sent by John to two churches not far from Ephesus, when he was about to make a tour of oversight. At the period we have now reached, Christianity had spread far and wide. The number of Christians at the end of the first century has been reckoned as high as half a million; and, as they were largely confined to the cities, there must have been a church of some size in almost every considerable city of the empire. Travel was easy; so preachers and teachers journeyed constantly among the churches, using such powers as they possessed for their edification. They were often self-appointed and without supervision; and, though they might bear "letters of commendation" (II Cor. 3:1; I Cor. 16:3), the danger is evident that in their ranks would be some who took this opportunity to spread heresies, finding the young churches eager for new ideas and not

always able to discriminate between truth and error. It was in warning against such deceivers that John wrote to "the elect lady." Men preaching the same gnostic doctrines that he denounced in the First Epistle, were abroad; and the church must be on its guard, testing all by the teaching of Christ, and refusing admission or even greeting to any who abode not in that teaching.

Besides these traveling teachers who sought to instruct the Christians, there were traveling evangelists who addressed themselves to the heathen. It is a band of these whom Gaius is asked to set forward on their journey. There was ever the possibility that a true brother in Christ might be denied a hearing or even Christian hospitality, if the leaders in a church had grown unduly suspicious of strangers, or were jealous of the influence newcomers might exert. The latter seems to have been the case with Diotrephes. To preserve his own cherished preeminence, he had refused to receive certain brethren who had come with a letter of commendation from John, and had done his utmost to keep others from receiving them. Opposed to him in spirit and action, and possibly threatened by him with excommunication, was Gaius whose unfailing hospitality had been reported to John by those who enjoyed it. To him, then, John writes, since a letter to the church will be blocked by Diotrephes, and commends to his confidence Demetrius, who may have been one of a band of evangelists whom Gaius is now asked to entertain. What we are specially interested to note is the growing independence of the individual church, and the increasing authority of its leader. By the very term, "the elect lady," John recognized that the church to which he is writing had its own separate, in-

dependent life,—a fact which Paul, to whom the whole church was the one, indivisible body of Christ, would have been slow to concede. And though John was still exercising the authority of a father over those whom he calls "my children," laying down rules and promising rewards, bestowing praise or censure, Diotrephes backed by a majority of his church would have nothing to do with the apostle's instruction in his absence, and would be hard to bring to obedience when he did appear. Whatever power John now had, came rather from personal influence than from apostolic office, and could not be transferred to a successor.

5. The Gospel of John.

The important problem of the Fourth Gospel is its trustworthiness. Can we accept as true the wonderful picture of Jesus it sets before us? The question is not disposed of by proving that John did or did not write the book. The aged apostle may unconsciously have mingled the ideal with the real in his reminiscences; this is possible though not probable. And on the other hand, if the author was some disciple of the apostle or some other John who had excellent sources of information and used them truthfully, his statements may be thoroughly reliable. Apart then from authorship what about the credibility of this gospel?

Some view it with suspicion from the fact that it sets forth so clearly the deity of Christ, from prologue to close proclaiming Him the Only Begotten Son of God. They say this is the Christology of Paul; and the Fourth Gospel is simply Pauline preaching put into the form of a biography. But was Paul's Christology correct, and upon what facts in Jesus' life—for he had plenty of opportunity to learn the facts—did he base

it, if not upon such as John narrates? And, supposing we reject the Fourth Gospel, are there not passages in the Synoptics that proclaim the deity of Jesus just as clearly? The Gospel of Mark is supposed to give the earliest picture of Jesus, "yet no gospel of the four is more emphatic upon the superhuman quality of Jesus' nature; this is not insisted upon but rather spontaneously assumed throughout as the one thing that impressed the beholder most" (R. J. Campbell). Nevertheless, the chief difficulty in accepting the Fourth Gospel does arise from the many ways in which it differs markedly from the Synoptics. These can be only briefly indicated and discussed; I have treated them more fully in my Introduction to the Life of Christ.

According to the Synoptics, Jesus began His ministry after the Baptist was imprisoned; His field was Galilee and the coasts until the last week in Jerusalem; His ministry met with great success at first; and the shadow of the cross did not appear till toward the close. Only one Passover is mentioned, and the whole period seems to be little more than a year. According to John, Jesus gathered disciples and preached in Judea while the Baptist was still working; opposition and prediction of death come at the very outset; repeated visits to Jerusalem occupy almost the whole of the book; and two Passovers, if not three, are recorded. Again, the teachings of Jesus in John differ greatly from those in the Synoptics. Instead of short, pregnant and usually practical sayings with numerous parables, we find long discourses on particular themes, theological and profound, and also allegories; the mission of Jesus is represented as universal rather than as directly to the Jews; and we hear only once of the Kingdom of God but often about eternal life. The

words and style of the speeches of Jesus so closely resemble those of John in the prologue or in the First Epistle that it is hard to distinguish between His words and John's comments on them, e.g., is John 3:16 by Jesus or by John? Still again, there is a marked difference in His self-revelation. In the Synoptics He is silent about His own claims until the disciples waken to the fact that He is the Christ; and even then He bids them not to tell it, and does not make an open proclamation until the last week of His life. In John there is no such reserve and progressive revelation. The Baptist points Him out as the Lamb of God; the first disciples hail Him as the Son of God; and in His public discourses he constantly emphasizes His relation to the Father. The miracles in the Synoptics are a manifestation of His power and sympathy, but in John they are a revelation of His divinity and are usually the text for a discourse. How can we reconcile these differences, exaggerated though some of them undoubtedly have been? For if we cannot, we must choose between John and the Synoptics; and the choice would probably be the latter.

John closes his book (the last chapter is an appendix) with two statements (20:30-31) which bear upon the problem we are discussing. He says, "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book." Evidently John professes to give only certain passages in the life of Christ, and his gospel is no more a biography than was the Oral Gospel on which the Synoptics are based. The Synoptics were already in circulation, and to repeat their contents would be useless; so John supplements them with further incidents. That his gospel was supplementary was recognized by those who read

it in the second century; and Tatian wove it in with the other three without difficulty, even as our modern Harmonies do. Not infrequently it throws light upon the others; e.g., the lament over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children" (Luke 13:34) is inexplicable until we learn from John that Jesus had repeatedly preached in Jerusalem. Sometimes it seems to correct the Synoptics, notably in regard to the time when the Last Supper was eaten. And ever it places before us not a new life of Jesus but simply new chapters in that life, the great majority being still unwritten. What guided John in his selection of these special chapters, his second statement reveals:—"These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name" (20:31). The purpose was the same as that which called forth his First Epistle, viz.: the defence of the deity of Jesus against those gnostic heretics who were assailing it. And to accomplish it the apostle chose certain scenes where Jesus most fully revealed Himself,—the bitter battles with the theological leaders at Jerusalem, and the intimate hours with His disciples alone. Moreover, the Synoptics are narration; the Fourth Gospel is also interpretation. The one pictures Jesus as the men to whom He spoke saw Him; the other sets Him forth as they might have seen Him had they looked and listened with spiritual discernment. Concerning the speeches of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel I think we must agree that, while the thought is Our Lord's the words are John's. That which Jesus from the nature of His hearers had to set forth briefly and sometimes obscurely, John gives us clearly and at length, even as its meaning has revealed itself to him through years

of increasing growth into the mind of the Master. Unless we prefer to put ourselves back among those who listened stupidly or with hostility in the beginning, we should rejoice that we can hear the Master through the lips of one who listened with love, and increasingly grew into better understanding.

The Fourth Gospel was early called the spiritual gospel; and the church has ever found it such. While there are those who dismiss it with contempt as "mystical, poor stuff * * * matter imported from Philo and the Alexandrian Platonist and put into the mouth of the Saviour" (J. S. Mill), the verdict of most Christians is stated by Dr. Philip Schaff when he pronounces it "the most original, the most important, and the most influential book in all literature."

XXI

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT

THE two dominant features of church life in the Apostolic Age were a constant recognition of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and an eager expectation of the coming of Christ. These combined to create a religious enthusiasm, a consciousness of divine guidance, and a subordination of temporal matters, which account for the deep spiritual life and thought of the Christians. They caused also an indifference to outward forms and fixed rules and human authority. Why look to men for guidance and government, when the leadings of the Spirit can be directly had? And why establish laws and create institutions for future generations, when the Lord even now may be standing at the door? Accordingly, when we study church organization and government in the Apostolic Age, we cannot expect to find authoritative and final forms. The desire to do so and to show that these forms are those of some particular church to-day, is natural and has given rise to heated debates or even worse; but it is doomed to disappointment unless we deliberately close our eyes to everything except what we seek. In the Apostolic Age there was no one fixed and final form of church life and government, but there were the possibilities or beginnings of all the later forms. Moreover, in our study we must ever be on guard against putting into a New Testament term some present-day meaning, regardless of the possibility that in the course of centuries the original meaning may have changed. For example, because a church

to-day calls certain officers elders, this does not prove that the elders in an apostolic church were like them in position or in duties.

1. Admission Into the Church.

The word in the New Testament translated church is ecclesia, and means literally a convocation. It was the term for the political assembly of Greek citizens, and was used in the Septuagint for the meeting of the congregation of Israel. It was a favourite word with Paul. Though it is sometimes used in the plural or with a local signification, there is but one church, and all everywhere who by faith are one with Christ belong to it. As one with Christ each member is also one with the Father and with all other members. The church is the present body of Christ, another and continuous incarnation, and is the agent for bringing in His Kingdom. The qualifications for church membership originally were simple, and are summed up in the word, conversion,—turning around; though that word is used but once in the New Testament (Acts 15: 3). A converted person is one who has turned around squarely from his old life of self and sin to the new life in Christ. The change involves both repentance and faith (Acts 20: 21); though of the two, faith was emphasized more often, because it presupposes repentance while repentance does not surely lead to faith. The acceptance of Christ was at once followed by a request for admission into church membership, because the convert was forced to leave his old Jewish or heathen circle, and naturally sought a place in the group of Christians. The question, Can a man follow Christ and yet not join the church? would not arise.

The rite by which a person was received into church

membership was baptism, accompanied by an open confession of faith. Evidently no large amount of instruction was required beforehand (Acts 2:41; 16:33); though as the years went on it was increasingly made a prerequisite, and in the next century a period of probation was required. Baptism followed belief so promptly that we nowhere find in the New Testament an unbaptized believer, but Simon Magus is an instance of a baptized unbeliever. He was treated as not really belonging to the church; but whether he would have been rebaptized had he repented and truly believed, we cannot say. The only recorded words of Jesus instituting the rite of baptism are Matt. 28:19; for Mark 16:16 was not of the original gospel, and shows the development of the later belief that baptism is indispensable for salvation. But the work of John the Baptist in preparing the people for the coming of the Messiah would naturally be imitated by the apostles in preparing them for His second coming. And at first Christian baptism seems to have had much the same significance as John's baptism, namely, an open avowal of faith in Christ as Messiah, involving both repentance of past sins and determination henceforth to live as His faithful follower until He come. Paul gave a deeper meaning to the rite because his whole conception of the Christian life was deeper. In his thought the Christian is one with Christ by mystical union, and baptism is the expression of that union, especially in His death and resurrection (Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4). This deeper meaning was not generally grasped by the later church; yet baptism in the early centuries marked such a complete change from the heathen to the Christian circle that its importance and influence could hardly be overstated. Dean Stanley

says, "Marriage is the only event in modern life which corresponds to what baptism was in the ancient church,—a second birth, a new creation, old things passing away, all things becoming new."

Concerning the form of baptism discussion has been so exhaustive and exhausting that to enter upon it seems unwise. Unquestionably immersion was the ordinary practice (Acts 8:38; Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:4; I Cor. 10:1-2), and in the early centuries it was usually triple immersion; but sprinkling or pouring may have been used when immersion was not feasible. The Didache lays down the rule, "If thou hast not living [running] water, baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold [because of illness], then in warm: but if thou hast neither, pour water upon the head thrice." The two strongest arguments against immersion as the only valid form of baptism are, first, the difficulty of it in some lands or circumstances:—as a universal rite baptism ought to be as free from hindrance as the Lord's Supper, of which the church never took over the Palestinian practice of reclining at the table and a preliminary foot-washing. And, second, the fact that Christianity is a religion of the spirit rather than of the letter, and one wherein no bondage to outward forms should be allowed to restrict the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus. Whatever may be said about the obligation to follow apostolic precedent in the form of baptism, practically all Protestants have departed from it in ruling that only ordained officers of the church can administer the rite. In the early spread of Christianity laymen preached and laymen baptized. Paul was baptized by "a certain disciple" (Acts 9:10), and in his own ministry entrusted the work largely to others (I Cor. 1:14-17);

Peter commanded that Cornelius should be baptized by the brethren who had come with him (Acts 10: 23, 48); and the Didache in laying down the form of baptism, says to all Christians, "Baptize ye thus."

The question whether infants were baptized cannot be settled by New Testament records, because the early converts were adults, and what is said about baptism naturally relates to them. The case of infants would not become prominent until the church settled down to a prolonged career. We know that by the third century infant baptism was general, though Tertullian opposed it and many thought adult baptism preferable. Baptism has been represented, perhaps rightly, as the Christian successor of circumcision; but there is nothing to indicate that this was recognized in the Apostolic Age. Jewish Christians continued to observe circumcision; and Gentile believers would not feel the need of an equivalent for it. The household rather than the individual was the normal unit, even as we are once more discovering that it should be, and whole households were baptized (Acts 16: 15, 33; I Cor. 1: 16); but even if there were infants in these households, we cannot be sure that they were baptized, since the faith of the parent may have been reckoned as making the child holy (I Cor. 7: 14) and therefore a member of the church without baptism. Undoubtedly the later development of superstitious ideas about the magical efficacy of the rite and its indispensability for salvation, would cause baptism to be deemed as necessary for the infant born in the church as for the adult outside of it; and we must also recognize that infant baptism was a factor in the struggle against infanticide and the general contempt for childhood which filled the heathen world.

What is meant by baptism for the dead (I Cor. 15:29), we cannot discover. Paul's reference to it is simply by way of argument without endorsement or condemnation; and all we can gather from his words is that it was some rite that would have no significance if there were no resurrection of the dead. It seems to have been confined to Corinth and to Paul's day; at least, we hear nothing of it elsewhere or later.

2. Church Fellowship.

While the unity of all Christians was clearly taught by Paul and others, the practical problem was how to maintain it. In the individual church this was not difficult, because the inevitable isolation of Christians from their unconverted neighbours bound them to one another, and the meeting for worship, which brought all the members of a church together frequently in closest communion, was an agency for creating a sense of unity, such as few heathen cults possessed. There were those who were tempted to forsake this assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25), either in times of persecution when meeting was dangerous, or in days of peace when apathy, self-sufficiency or bitterness toward a neighbour had been allowed to rise. Separation of this sort was then as now the sure road to ultimate loss of faith; for this reason the Didache says, "Thou shalt seek out daily the faces of the saints that thou mayest be refreshed by their words." But when members of one church were closely united, the problem still remained as to how the widely scattered churches could be kept in touch with one another, and held as one in life, doctrine and worship.

The first years in Jerusalem, when the whole church centered in that city, and every member was close to

every other, did much towards initiating fellowship. We can hardly overestimate the service of those years in creating a sense of unity as well as in establishing a common creed and cult. And until the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, Jewish Christians everywhere continued to look to the mother church for guidance and example. We have noticed how instructions or advisors were sent from Jerusalem to churches in Samaria (Acts 8:14), Antioch (11:22), and Syria and Cilicia (15:23). In the case of the Gentile churches, those of each Roman province looked to the metropolitan church of which they were the children for advice, sympathy and oversight; and this kept each group united. Ephesus and the churches of Asia, Corinth and the churches of Achaia, are examples of this form of union. The several provincial groups were bound to one another in various ways. Paul held his churches together, widely as they were scattered, through frequent letters and personal visits; and his journeys to Jerusalem and gifts to the poor of that church, were intended to promote brotherly relations between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile. Other apostles doubtless were doing similar work towards unifying the church; and there were, as we shall presently remark, certain brethren who, either appointed by the church or impelled by the Spirit, journeyed among the churches preaching and teaching. More fruitful in fellowship than any of these agencies was the intercourse of Christian laymen. When they travelled on special errands or regular business from city to city, they would take with them letters of commendation or introduction from their own church, and in each stopping-place would seek out the Christians. Here in the home of some hospitable brother, or at the

gathering-place for worship, they would report what the brethren in other cities were doing, compare church practices, discuss doctrines and difficulties and dangers,—in short, have a most profitable exchange of Christian thought. In this way the churches were kept intimately acquainted with one another, and unity of faith and practice, as well as brotherly feeling, was strongly though almost unconsciously promoted. A church located outside the great lines of travel lacked this constant source of sympathy and help, and suffered accordingly.

3. Church Officers.

The key to the whole vexed subject of church government is this:—leadership grows out of service—he who renders the greatest service is the highest officer (Mark 10:42-45); and service is rendered according to gifts, i.e., natural capacities strengthened and consecrated by the Spirit (I Peter 4:10 f.). Evidently the field of service might be some particular church or the church universal; but the division would be according to gifts and opportunity, and a person might pass from the smaller field to the larger or the reverse. Likewise, he might have more than one gift, and use different ones at different times. It is in connection with the subject of spiritual gifts that Paul sets forth two lists, illustrative rather than exhaustive, of what seem to be church officials. "God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues" (I Cor. 12:28; cf. Id. 9-11), and "He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11; cf. Rom. 12:6-8).

The apostles stand preeminent. They were, as the name signifies, missionaries; and their office corresponded closely to that of the foreign missionary of to-day. In the narrower sense of the term an apostle was one who had been appointed by Jesus directly, and had been prepared for his work by being with Him during His public ministry and by having seen Him after His resurrection (Mark 3:14; Acts 1:21 f.; I Cor. 9:1). The number would be limited to the Twelve, among whom Matthias took the place of Judas, and Paul; though since Paul had not received the full preparation he reckoned himself as "one untimely born." In the broader sense of the word an apostle was anyone whose special gift was the ability to labour at planting the church in new fields, and to act as an ambassador for Christ, i.e., His representative in a foreign land. He might be sent forth by some church; in which case he would be given a special appointment and be reckoned an apostle only while he was under that appointment, perhaps holding another office at another time; or he might go forth independently. The ceremony of laying on of hands which accompanied his appointment is thought by some to have imparted apostolic powers, e.g., to work miracles (II Cor. 12:12), and by others to have been either an act of ordination or benediction. The need of missionary work was great, and many a believer must have given himself to it as his life mission. Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7), Silvanus and Timothy (I Thess. 2:6), Apollos (I Cor. 4:9) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25) are termed apostles; and the Didache speaks as if the number at the close of the century was large.

The apostles were pioneers, and their authority was

much like that of a pioneer missionary to-day. Some exercised great influence; others, even of the original Twelve, probably very little; much would depend on the degree of their qualifications for the work. Necessarily they had to organize churches, appoint office-bearers and act autocratically in many ways; yet it was expedient to persuade rather than dictate, and to entrust to a newly formed church all the power it could wisely use. Some scholars, dwelling on certain statements in Acts and Paul's letters, insist that the apostles directed all church affairs; others, dwelling on other statements in the same documents, declare that the apostles had nothing to do directly with government, leaving it to the individual church. "Six months spent in watching a missionary at work would have taught them how to combine their views" (Lindsay).

A prophet was one whose mission was to speak for God, giving to his fellow-Christians messages of edification and exhortation and comfort (I Cor. 14:3). His particular gift of the Spirit—inspiration—was the ability to receive and proclaim dynamic truths. He might foretell the future, yet he would do this, not to satisfy idle curiosity, but to build up, stir up or cheer up the church. The gift of prophecy was possessed by many a man who used it only in his own local church, and also by those who went forth as apostles. Paul and Barnabas were ranked as prophets or teachers in the church at Antioch before their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1). But as a special and universal officer the prophet travelled from church to church, rousing his brethren to higher spiritual living by glowing words which came hot from his heart. Agabus, of whom we hear at Jerusalem and Antioch and Caesarea, is an example. The Didache

has much to say about those who come "speaking in the Spirit."

A teacher had as his gift the ability to instruct his brethren in Christian truth. The opportunity to learn and the power to impart constituted his call to this important office. He might not be able to establish new churches, or to preach with compelling power; but he could patiently and clearly expound the teachings of Jesus and the Christian doctrines. And there was great need of such teaching among men who had been received into the church with little instruction and no previous acquaintance with Christianity. Like the prophet he might exercise his gift in his own church, or go forth among the churches. Doubtless at first the oral gospel would be the basis of his instruction, and later he might bear with him some written gospel, or any writings of the apostles which he had been fortunate enough to secure. Whether we should place "the evangelist" in this group or in that of apostles of the second class, is an unimportant question. Though the office is recognized by Paul as a distinct one, Philip is the only person named in the New Testament as holding it (Acts 21:8), except as Timothy is exhorted to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5); and in the post-apostolic age it is not mentioned. An evangelist is one who tells the good tidings, the gospel of Christ; and all who went forth bearing the words of eternal life to those who had not heard them, were evangelists (Acts 8:4).

Although these officers were sent out by the churches, and carried letters of commendation, they were under no supervision as they laboured, and there was nothing to prevent incompetent or base-minded men from joining their number, either with forged let-

ters or with none at all. "It was the age of wandering preachers and teachers, of religious excitements, of curiosity about new faiths, when all who had something new to teach hawked their theories as traders dragged and exposed their merchandise." The inexperience and interest and hospitality of the young Christian churches offered a fertile field for such men; and we are not surprised to read of false apostles, prophets and teachers (II Cor. 11:13; Gal. 1:7; II Peter 2:1). The harm these men might work is evident, and is dwelt upon strongly in the Epistle of Jude. The safeguard against it was the ability and duty of each church to test all who came, and to determine whether their messages were of God or not (I John 4:1; Rev. 2:2; I Cor. 10:15). There was a gift of "discernings of spirits" (I Cor. 12:10), which its possessor could use to guard his church against imposters. In its purely spiritual form this gift was sensitiveness to the truth that is in Christ Jesus whereby the brethren could detect whether one who came in His name really represented Him or not (I Cor. 12:3; I John 4:1-6); but when the church began to sink to a lower level of spiritual life, it trusted more in its ability to discover by outward signs whether the stranger was working for the food that perisheth or for that which abideth unto eternal life. The tests laid down in the Didache are of this later sort, e.g., "Not every one that speaketh in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord. * * * whoever in the spirit saith, Give me money or something else, ye shall not hear him."

Thus far we have considered only the work of spreading the gospel and building up the church in the faith. But how about the administration of the affairs

of the local church? Who were the officers to whom this was entrusted? Here Paul's list gives us little aid, though "helps and governments" are gifts out of the use of which offices may arise. In the beginning the only person outside its own membership to whom a church can look for counsel and direction, is the apostle who founded it; and though he retains his fatherly interest in it, he is seldom where he can be consulted. Really there is very little need at first of any officers. Any member can baptize or, if he has the gift, can teach and preach; there is no church building; the gatherings for worship are most informal; discipline, as we shall see, is administered by the whole little group of believers; there are no funds to be cared for. Organization comes later, as the church develops; and it arises out of special needs. And in forming it, the pattern is naturally some organization with which the believers are already familiar,—the synagogue for Jewish-Christians, the club of some sort for Gentile converts. Bearing in mind that church government is a gradual development based on need, shaped somewhat by environment, and with dignity of service according to special gifts, we can conjecture its probable rise, though no exact dates can be assigned because some churches would progress much faster than others.

1. The infant church has no officers; it is a little brotherhood with all members equal. Any matter affecting it is talked over and arranged at its frequent meetings. Of course, if the missionary (apostle) is present or can be consulted, he may exercise supreme authority; and yet, if he is a wise father, he will do this as little as possible. There is no definite organization, partly because the group is so small that it is not needed and partly because the expectation of Christ's

speedy coming makes organization seem absurd. Yet, since every member uses the gifts he possesses—"healings, helps, governments" (I Cor. 12:28), and the like,—there will be certain persons whose ability makes them leaders, active and wise in caring for all the interests of the church. And the apostle will naturally commend such to the confidence and following of the rest. Such seems to be what Paul was doing when he wrote the Thessalonians (as Frame translates it),—"Furthermore, we ask you, brothers, to appreciate those who labour among you, both acting as your leaders in the Lord and warning you; and to rate them very highly in love for the sake of their work" (I Thess. 5:12-13),—an exhortation called forth by the presence of dissensions, as the command which immediately follows, "Be at peace among yourselves," reveals. The statement that Paul and Barnabas as they revisited the churches on their way homeward from the first missionary journey, "appointed for them elders in every church" (Acts 14:23), can hardly mean more than this, unless those Galatian churches had advanced remarkably fast in organization.

2. The burden that would first be felt most pressingly and perplexingly by any church was the care of its poor. Not only was the proportion of dependent members often so large as to tax the resources of the rest; but there was also constant danger that the charity of the little church would be abused by unworthy claimants. Constant foresight and careful discrimination were needed in the matter. Accordingly, the first recorded step in church organization is the selection of seven men by the church at Jerusalem, following the advice of the apostles, to look after the poor

widows. The qualifications for this office are carefully laid down,—"men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3); and the apostles induct the Seven into office with prayer and the Jewish rite of laying on of hands. Two of these men, Stephen and Philip, we know to have been of marked ability; and doubtless the others were the same. Though this order of the Seven soon was ended by the scattering of the church, that which was done at Jerusalem would be done elsewhere as need arose. The leading men in a church, those who were older in years or Christian experience, would be selected and set apart for the difficult work of caring for the poor and, naturally, for any other matters that arose. The term elder, again with Jewish precedent, would be applied to them, partly as a title and partly as describing their age (See I Peter 5:1-2, 5; I Tim. 5:1-2, 17). They might be selected by the apostle, if present, but more often by the church itself. We notice that when Paul and Barnabas brought aid from Antioch for the famine-stricken church at Jerusalem, it was given to "the elders" (Acts 11:30), a body that seems to have then taken the place of the Seven.

3. As church life grew more complex, a further division of duties became necessary. Some of these elders would still continue to look after the poor, and in this service would be definitely recognized as deacons; while others would devote themselves to government of the church as its overseers,—episkopoi, bishops (Phil. 1:1). All would still continue to be elders, but they would be set apart by ordination to these special offices. The ordination would be deemed a recognition of gifts already bestowed by the Holy

Spirit (Acts 20:28, cf. 13:2) rather than an impartation of new gifts.

4. Still later, and probably not until the close of the Apostolic Age, a further specialization of work would arise. The several churches in a city, or the city church and those that had been founded by it in the vicinity, would need general supervision. And some one of the overseeing elders possessing pre-eminent ability and experience would be appointed to that office (III John, 1, 9 f.). Inevitably in any body of administrators such a leader arises, whether recognized officially or not. The usefulness of such an arrangement would justify its existence and cause its extension. And in the second century we meet everywhere the "monarchical episcopate."

Thus we find in the church at various stages of its development the forerunners of the great forms of church polity adopted by various denominations to-day. To pronounce any one of them the final and divinely appointed form is more than we have a right to do. Different conditions call for correspondingly different forms of organization and government; and that which under the circumstances most fully promotes the harmony and growth of the church, bears in this very fact the stamp of divine approval.

4. Church Discipline.

The problem of dealing with unworthy members was forced upon the church from its beginning, as we have seen in the case of Ananias and Sapphira and of Simon Magus. Many of the members had previously held very low moral standards (I Cor. 6:9-11), and had been received with little instruction. Naturally their lives were not always such as to avoid censure

and correction. "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. 4:28) seems a strange injunction to give a church member, but, alas! it was sometimes needed. One of Paul's most lasting works was the ethical teaching he constantly promulgated.

Theoretically the discipline was administered by the whole church, and was considered to be by the Great Head of the church, unseen but actually in their midst (Matt. 18:20). This could be carried out practically when the church was small in numbers and intimately acquainted with each member (II Cor. 2:6); but more often discipline was administered by apostles, prophets, elders and others who would best know the mind of Christ (I Cor. 4:21; 5:3 f.; I Tim. 3:4). The forms of discipline were based upon Christ's instruction (Matt. 18:15-20). There would be private admonition (Gal. 6:1), public correction (I Tim. 5:20) and excommunication (I Cor. 5:5) with the possibility of restoration after due penitence and amendment (II Cor. 2:7).

XXII

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

THOUGH the little band of Christians in any heathen city delighted to meet together and join in worship of their common Lord, the opportunities to do so were limited. Poverty kept many at hard toil through long hours, and slavery forbade others from counting any hour their own. There was no special time or place that could be reckoned sacred; the church must meet when and where it could, usually in the late evening or early morning, and at the house of any member who had a room large enough. In the meetings for worship all took part as desire prompted and spiritual gifts enabled; there was neither a fixed order of service nor a recognized leader. Evidently the same causes that kept church government undeveloped, operated to make church worship most informal. Lightfoot declares the Christian ideal to be "a holy season extending the whole year round, a temple confined only by the limits of the habitable globe, a priesthood coextensive with the human race." And this ideal may be said to have shaped Christian worship in the Apostolic Age more fully than it ever has since.

1. Sacred Days.

In the weeks immediately following Pentecost the new converts met daily for worship and the communion meal (Acts 2:46). Filled with enthusiasm they gave themselves entirely to the work of proclaiming Jesus as

Messiah, and they counted all days as holy through His presence. Since they still were holding strictly to Jewish practices, they would keep the Jewish Sabbath as hitherto, though with something of the new spirit concerning it which the apostles had gained from Jesus. The first day of the week also would be a day of sacred significance to them, because on that day their Lord rose from the dead. It came presently to be known as "the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). As time went on and the church in Jerusalem settled down to a more regular life, meetings for worship became less frequent because daily tasks and duties must be performed. The Jewish observance of Saturday would make that day preeminently the time for worship, even after the doors of the synagogue were closed against Christians; but Sunday would be in a special sense the Christian day. When Christianity went out into Gentile lands it bore these two days with it, and in the Eastern church they were long observed with nearly equal honour. For Gentile believers, however, the Jewish Sabbath was less significant than the Lord's Day, and in the battle against Judaizers its observance was decried (Col. 2:16); so we find the first day of the week selected as the time for Christian assemblies (I Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7). Nevertheless, the constant teaching of Paul was that all days alike are holy, and that to esteem one more sacred than another is contrary to Christian liberty (Rom. 14:5; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16). It marks a decline in the high religious level when the church began to teach that one day in seven, instead of all days, belongs to the Lord, and that certain occupations are secular and certain others sacred.

Friday was a day of sacred and sad associations because on this day Jesus was crucified. As early as

the second century, and possibly still earlier, the custom arose of observing it with fastings and prayer; and from its semi-sacred character the Christians felt that no new enterprise should be begun on that day; work already in hand could be carried on, but other work would not receive the blessing of God—a feeling surviving in the present-day superstition against entering upon a journey or the like on Friday. Wednesday, when Judas bargained to betray Jesus, was also a day for fasting. These two days later were called "station days," a name applied to the Roman soldier's days of sentry duty. There is no indication in the New Testament that any annual Christian festival was observed; but Good Friday, Easter and Whitsunday would presently arise from the blending of Christian association with Jewish festivals. In the second century there was heated discussion over the proper date for observing Easter. Christmas did not begin to be celebrated until the fourth century.

2. Sacred Places.

The temple and the synagogues remained dear to Jewish Christians, and they attended the services in them; but from the first they gathered in their own houses for distinctly Christian worship and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (Acts 1:13; 2:1, 46; 4:31; 12:12 et al.). Gentile believers—and also Jewish, when the synagogue was closed against them—had only the house as a meeting-place. Any member of the little church whose rooms were suited for the gathering would place them at the use of his brethren; and the group who met there would be known as "the church in the house" of that brother (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15). The home of Mark in Jerusalem is a no-

table illustration of this (Acts 12:12). We have seen that in Ephesus Paul secured for Christian work and worship the lecture-room of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9); and possibly James when speaking of "your synagogue" may refer to the place for worship rather than to the assembly (James 2:2); but such public places would seldom be available, and in times of persecution would be most undesirable. A church in the modern sense of a building devoted exclusively to Christian assemblies, is not mentioned before the third century.

3. The Public Religious Service.

This was intended primarily for believers but was open to the unconverted, even as the synagogue service was intended for Jews but was open to Gentiles (I Cor. 14:23). It was more like our modern prayer-meeting than like our church service:—the Christians in the neighbourhood gathered in some private home; we hear of no official leader; and each person took part according to his gifts (14:26). The chief end of the meeting was edification (14:12) and not divine service in the sense of a formal, obligatory meeting for worship. The temple continued to be the place for such service, at least in the thought of the Jewish Christians.

There was no fixed order of exercises at these meetings; each member took part as the spirit prompted; more than one might be taking part at the same time; and eagerness sometimes gave rise to disorder (14:26 f.). A gathering might be devoted wholly to prayer (Acts 12:5, 12), but generally there were several or all of the following exercises:

(*a*) Prayers. The meeting seems to have begun with a series of prayers. These were offered by different persons as the Spirit moved, but were considered to

be by all (I Cor. 14:16). No special forms of prayer are enjoined, nor is there any mention of the Lord's Prayer, though some think that Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6 refer to it, because the original Aramaic "Abba" is retained. But the stereotyped forms of salutation and benediction which appear in the epistles, and the injunction to establish definite kinds of prayer (I Tim. 2:1 f.), hint of the beginnings of a liturgy; and the liturgical service of the Jewish synagogue would furnish a pattern. In the Didache we have set forms of prayer, and the direction that each Christian repeat the Lord's Prayer three times daily.

(*b*) Singing. This was a regular part of the synagogue worship, and was taken over into Christian worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The songs might be either Old Testament psalms or Christian hymns; possibly we have fragments of these early hymns in such passages as Eph. 5:14 and I Tim. 3:16. The music was little more than intoning, so that there was no great difference between prayer and song (cf. Eph. 5:19-20; I Cor. 14:15); indeed, Weizsäcker thinks that "psalm" in I Cor. 14:26 means a prayer of praise.

(*c*) Public Reading. The Bible of the early church was the Old Testament, inherited from the Jews and opened to the Gentiles by its Greek version, the Septuagint. It was the sacred text-book of life and doctrine; and its authority was recognized as the same as that of the Spirit dwelling in each believer. When the two seemed to disagree, the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures was used to produce harmony. Since the Old Testament was publicly read in the synagogue, we may be sure that it would be in the Christian meetings, though there is no clear indication of this (cf. I Tim. 4:13). The writings of the apostles were also

publicly read (I Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:3) as profitable and of the same authority as the words of the author if he had been present, and accounts of Jesus would be read or still earlier recited; but none of these would be deemed sacred like the Old Testament.

(*d*) Teaching. Those peculiarly fitted by the Spirit for this work constituted, as we have seen, a special order in the church at large (I Cor. 12:28); but certain persons in each church might act as teachers (Id. 14:26). Systematic instruction in the doctrines was much needed, and could be given only by the thoughtful and educated. Paul (I Cor. 12:8) recognizes two different gifts that fit for teaching, namely, the word of wisdom, probably reflective thought, and the word of knowledge, probably intuition. The passage, I Tim. 5:17, referring to certain elders "who labour in the word and in teaching," is used now to establish the Presbyterian distinction between ruling elders and ministers.

(*e*) Prophecy. This formed a very important part of the service. It was, as we have seen, the utterance of a message held to be directly inspired, whether received at the moment of utterance or earlier. The message might be about the present or the future: but it must tend to "edification, exhortation, and consolation" (I Cor. 14:3). Anyone could utter a prophecy, but evidently the truth of what he said must be tested by the spiritual discrimination of the church. Prophecy was a much more general gift than teaching, and was specially to be desired (I Cor. 14:1, 5, 39). The helpfulness to all of a frank statement of real spiritual experience by any, explains why.

(*f*) Speaking with Tongues or in a Tongue. This was the exercise of a special and showy gift which pres-

ently ceased, partly through the strong check placed by Paul upon its use, and partly through the decline of religious enthusiasm. About all we know of it is gained from Paul's description (I Cor. 14:1-33) and from religious psychology. It occurred in prayer or was a kind of prayer (14:2, 14), and to the unbelieving it seemed like the utterance of an insane person (14:23). There were divers kinds of tongues (12:10); and what was said was unintelligible (14:2), unless either the speaker or some other person could interpret (14:13, 28),—there being, also, a gift of interpretation of tongues (12:10; 14:26). The tongues are best explained as ejaculations in one's native language or in foreign languages subconsciously possessed, or else as mere broken outcries. The speaker who uttered them might afterwards state what passed through his mind, or some sympathetic brother might be able to follow the windings of thought thus obscurely expressed, and reveal them to the rest.

(*g*) Other features of the meeting are less certain. There may have been giving of alms,—there was in the synagogue,—since there was constant need of contributions to the poor; but, though Paul directs the Corinthians to lay aside an offering for the poor in Jerusalem each week, he does not say that this should be brought to the public meeting (I Cor. 16:2). Something in the form of a creed may have been recited, even as the Shema was in the synagogue; but we do not know its form,—the so-called Apostles' Creed was a gradual growth in later days. And the meeting may have closed with a benediction and a "kiss of peace."

Concerning the public meeting Lindsay says, "Foreign as it may seem to us, the like can still be seen in mission fields among the hot-blooded people of the East. I

have witnessed everything but the speaking with tongues in meetings of native Christians in the Deccan in India, when European influence was not present to restrain Eastern enthusiasm and condense it in Western molds."

4. Women and Public Worship.

While the great fact, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus" did away with the old separations of race and class and even sex (Gal. 3:28), the church very wisely did not undertake to abolish all established distinctions; to do so would have been to create confusion and disaster. The rule was laid down, "Let each man abide in the calling wherein he was called" (I Cor. 7:20); and the gradual operation of Christian principles was trusted to work any desirable changes. We have seen this illustrated in the case of the slaves; it held likewise in the case of the women. There was no question as to woman's spiritual equality with man, or her right to be his fellow-worker in Christ Jesus. The list of noble Christian women who laboured much with Paul in the gospel is a long one; to give it in detail would be almost to repeat the story of Christian origins. Nevertheless, in that age, as unfortunately in most of those that have followed, women had very scanty opportunities to gain an education, and consequently were not intellectually the equals of men. Moreover, they were bound by social restrictions that prevented them from mingling freely with men under penalty of being misjudged ethically. This was not equally so in all lands. In Palestine and also in certain parts of Asia Minor women had much freedom and exerted much influence in public matters; but in Greece they were largely restricted to the home, and only women of questionable character appeared in public assemblies. This diversity of condition

may explain in part the seemingly contradictory injunctions concerning woman's share in the public meetings.

Women freely attended the meetings for Christian worship, and there is no indication that they were separated by a screen from the men, as they were in a Jewish synagogue. Of course, these meetings were held in private houses where special arrangements for secluding the women worshippers were lacking. Very probably, however, the women sat together in one part of the room. Spiritual gifts were bestowed upon them as well as upon men (Acts 2:4, 17-18; 21:9); and since they possessed these gifts, they could use them, certainly in prayer and prophesy, at public meetings, provided (at least, in Corinth) they did not discard the head-covering which every modest Greek woman wore in public (I Cor. 11:5). The uncovering of the head in public is condemned on the ground, not of immodesty but of insubordination; it expressed the claim "to have dominion over man" (I Tim. 2:12), and this Paul stoutly denounces. Whatever be said about his reasons for denying the social equality of the sexes—and certainly he does confuse us as he gives them—the danger of throwing off long-established restraints and claiming liberties when almost unprepared to use them, is evident. It has been illustrated more than once since Paul's time when women, long held in seclusion and enforced ignorance, have been granted the freedom that is in Christ Jesus, and have supposed that spiritual equality in itself brings social equality. This same principle of subordination produces the statement, "I permit not a woman to teach" (I Tim. 2:12)—a restriction justified by the difference in character between praying or prophesying and teaching. A devout but uneducated person may most profitably pray or testify

in a meeting, while the same person attempting to expound doctrines would work much mischief.

More difficult of explanation is the absolute command, "Let women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (I Cor. 14:34); since this seems to contradict the permission to pray and prophesy. It is, perhaps, best explained as a restriction from speaking with tongues, the subject which Paul is specially treating in the chapter where it occurs. The emotional temperament of untrained women, and the conspicuousness and comparative uselessness of speaking with tongues, would account for the prohibition. Men were to use this gift with great restraint; women not at all. Nevertheless, the desire to learn, which is indicated in the following verse, would not seem to have anything to do with speaking in tongues. Whatever interpretation we may put upon this and Paul's other restrictions of woman's part in public meetings, most of us would agree that they are binding to-day only in so far as woman's position intellectually and socially is the same as when they were uttered.

A difficult problem which must often have arisen, and which may be discussed briefly here, though apart from our general subject, is, What should be done with a polygamous household or a member of it when converted to Christianity? Jesus had taught monogamy. Should this be insisted upon? If a polygamist was forced to put away all his wives except the first, would not innocent women thus deprived of home and the almost indispensable protection of a husband, suffer unjustly? Or if the wife of a polygamist was converted, was it her duty to leave him and also probably her little children? The only reference to a restriction of polygamy lies possibly in the rule laid down that a

church officer—bishop, elder, deacon—must be the husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6); though Brigham Young, defending polygamy, expounded this as meaning "one wife, at least." The church of the second century, like the Greek church of to-day, considered it a command against second marriages. Though a second marriage is recommended for young widows (I Tim. 5:14; cf. I Cor. 7:39), it does not seem to have been regarded as the highest ideal, since I Tim. 5:9 admits into the order of widows cared for by the church only those who have been "the wife of one man." Others would understand by the husband of one wife the man who did not indulge in heathen licentiousness; but would not all truly Christian husbands be such? The fact that the restriction is laid down for church officers alone, and that nothing else is said about polygamous households, seems to indicate that polygamy, entered into before conversion, was tolerated as a sad consequence of previous ignorance. No Christian, of course, would be allowed to take more than one wife; but if he had taken more than one in heathen days, he need not put any of them away. Nevertheless, his condition would be anomalous, and he must not be placed in office by the church, lest this might look as if the church endorsed polygamy. Whether the same rule should be followed to-day is much discussed, and cannot always have the same answer because the character of polygamy, and the position of a woman separated from her husband, differ so greatly in different polygamous lands.

5. The Private Religious Service.

The spirit of Christian brotherhood, which made each little group of believers feel itself to be one

family, found expression in a common meal, held at first daily and afterwards at regular times. Such meals were usual in both Jewish and Gentile circles; but the poverty of some of the Christians may have helped on the practice. To the room where such a meal was held, only those who had already confessed Christ were admitted. The central thought of the gathering was fellowship in Christ and thanksgiving for His redemption. Concerning the meal Tertullian says, "Our feast explains itself by its name; the Greeks call it Agape, i.e., love." It is referred to by that name, "love-feast," in Jude 12. To it each member according to his ability brought food which was shared by all in a truly brotherly manner. The poor who were unable to be present would have portions sent to them; and from this practice, as well as from John 13:29, arose the present-day custom of an offering for the poor of the church at the sacramental service. The hour of meeting would depend upon circumstances; but in churches where the majority were not free to come during the working hours it would have to be in the evening. While the meal was a social one, it was also a sacred one; the remembrance of the meals that Jesus shared with his disciples, the belief that though unseen He was sharing this with them, and the sacrament of the Eucharist with which it closed, would make it such. Evidently anything that marred the spirit of brotherhood and devotion, would destroy the true character of the meal; and of a gathering thus marred the apostle said, "It is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper" (I Cor. 11:20 f.; Gal. 2:12).

The most sacred moment in the Agape came when the bread and the cup were blessed and the Lord's death celebrated by partaking of them. From the

prayer of thanksgiving this celebration was known as the Eucharist; but it was also called "the breaking of bread." It is thought by some that Acts 2:46, "breaking bread at home," indicates that at the outset the daily meal in each private Christian home was made a sacramental meal after this manner; and a possible precedent is found in the Jewish custom on Friday evening of consecrating with a prayer of thanksgiving the bread and wine on the family table, and distributing them to all present. However this may be, the Agape with its accompanying Eucharist presently came to be held only on a special day, probably Sunday, and was a community meal. Still later, perhaps on account of Paul's stern rebuke of the disorders at Corinth, and the difficulty of preserving a high spiritual tone to the meal because of the decline in religious life, the Eucharist was separated from the common meal, and celebrated at a separate time, and the term "the Lord's Supper" was restricted to it. But just when in the second century this separation took place we cannot determine,—probably at different times in different localities. The Didache lays down the rule, "On the Lord's Day do ye assemble and break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, in order that your sacrifice may be pure;" and it gives a prayer, a very beautiful one, to be used before distributing the cup, and another for the close of the service. The warnings of Paul against failure to realize the true significance of the service, have had the unfortunate result in many instances of casting about the eucharistic service an atmosphere of solemnity rather than the original one of rejoicing, and of making participation in it to some an anxious and almost fearful act. The spiritual meaning and

value of the Eucharist, concerning which there has been endless discussion, does not come within the scope of the present volume.

One other private meeting of the Christians was when they met to transact the business of the church. Since all affairs were settled by the joint action of all members, occasions would constantly arise when they must assemble for discussion and decision. The reception of some unknown prophet or apostle, the granting of a letter of commendation to some member who was about to make a journey, the relief of a case of poverty and suffering, the despatch of a letter asking apostolic advice on some disputed matter, the appointment of a delegate to represent the church,—these are instances given in the New Testament of joint action by the church. And Paul urges upon the Corinthians the even more delicate and difficult task of acting as a law-court for settling disputes between brethren (I Cor. 6:1 f.). While we may not rightly call these gatherings meetings for worship, the consciousness that Jesus was in their midst, and the constant looking to Him for guidance in all matters, made them not far from such.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

LUKE gives, though not clearly, the relative position of events in his narrative; but there are only two of these that we can place with fixed dates in contemporaneous history, viz.: the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44 A.D. and the coming of Gallio as proconsul to Corinth in the summer of 51 A.D. The death of Jesus was formerly placed at 30 A.D. but now more often is assigned to 29 A.D. With these three dates we can fairly well construct a chronology of Acts; but other dates of the Apostolic Age must remain largely conjectural.

A.D.	
29 (30).	Death of Jesus (Passover). Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost).
31.	Death of Stephen. Conversion of Saul (fourteenth year before Gal. 2:1).
34.	Paul returns to Jerusalem, and then goes to Syria and Cilicia.
32-43.	Spread of Christianity as far as Antioch. Conversion of Cornelius.
43 (44).	Barnabas and Saul working together at Antioch.
44.	Martyrdom of the apostle James. Death of Herod Agrippa I.
45.	Famine visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem. Events of Gal. 2:1-10.
46-47.	First missionary tour of Paul and Barnabas. Epistle of James.

48.	Paul in Antioch. Visit of Peter (Gal. 2:11 f.). Council at Jerusalem.
49-51.	Second missionary tour of Paul. I and II Thessalonians.
52.	Felix procurator of Judea. Paul at Antioch writes Galatians.
52-56.	Third missionary tour of Paul. I and II Corinthians. Romans.
56-58.	Paul arrested in Jerusalem and imprisoned in Caesarea.
58.	Festus procurator. Paul winters at Malta on his way to Rome.
59-61.	Paul at Rome writes Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians.
61-67.	Paul released, continues his mission tours, writes I Timothy and Titus.
61 (62).	Death of James, brother of the Lord.
64.	Nero's persecution.
66.	Jewish revolt against Rome. Gospel of Mark. Hebrews.
67 (68).	Paul again imprisoned and put to death. II Timothy.
70.	Siege of Jerusalem finished in September. Destruction of temple.
70-80.	Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Epistle of Jude. I Peter.
81-96.	Domitian emperor. Book of Acts. Apocalypse of John.
90- ?.	Epistles and Gospel of John. II Peter.

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